

## Unit 1: Overview of Critical Care Nursing

Jess Bower

### ONLINE CONTENT (1H)

#### Unit Objectives:

- Select appropriate nursing interventions to manage common problems and needs of critically ill patients. (1,6,)\*
- Develop strategies to manage issues related to caregivers of critically ill patients. (1,2,6)\*
- Apply the principles of hemodynamic monitoring to the nursing and interprofessional management of patients receiving monitoring. (1,2,6,7)\*

\*Course Objectives

#### Assignment:

Review- Unit 1: Overview of Critical Care Nursing PowerPoint.  
Read the case study, then answer the case study questions below.

### CASE STUDY

- ▶ Margaret Mayfield is a 62 year old female who has been admitted from the ED to the critical care unit, after calling 911 due to severe fatigue, weakness, and fever. Her past medical history includes: dwarfism, HTN, hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus, and has a chronic Foley catheter due to urinary retention. She lives alone in an apartment and has no family members. Her friend is her POA for healthcare, and is the only contact listed. She has a home health aide visit once a week to assist her with bathing and all of her meals are delivered from local take-out restaurants. She utilizes a walker at home, however reports she hasn't been out of bed for the last several days due to weakness and fever. She uses a private ambulance service to go to physician appointments; this is the only time she gets out of her apartment for the last three years. Home medications include carvedilol, simvastatin, aspirin, and insulin. She does not have her medications with her and does not know the doses.

## Case Study Questions

- ▶ As the critical care nurse caring for her, what overall concerns do you have?  
One main concern that I have would be some sort of infection or even sepsis due to the weakness and high fever and having a chronic indwelling Foley catheter. Due to her immobility and diabetes another concern could be dehydration and possible risk for DVTs.
- ▶ Describe ways in which you would communicate with her and her POA for healthcare. Include what topics you would discuss at this time in her hospitalization.  
While communicating with the patient, it is important to be clear and respectful as well as understanding. It is also important to encourage questions and listen to her and the POA. I would discuss her current condition and what my suspicions are regarding the possible UTI and dehydration. I would like to explain the importance of checking blood sugar and getting blood work. Discussion of code status and advance directives and goals as well as anticipated discharge needs.
- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.  
Some possible legal issues related to this care could include autonomy and beneficence. Margaret appears to be capable at this point in making her own decisions. It is important to understand and respect her wishes.
- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.  
Some legal issues that may present would be verifying who is the POA and make sure all proper paperwork is filled out regarding code status. Medication reconciliations is also critical if she does not recall what her home medication is or doses.
- ▶ In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?  
As her nurse, I would advocate to get Margaret checked asap for possible UTI. I would also ensure safe medication reconciliation and glucose management. I would encourage her to ask questions and provide simple detailed terms and offer open ended questions to help explain to her what is going on with her health and a goal to get her feeling better.
- ▶ What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?  
Some other departments I would involve in Margarets care would be Pharmacy to get her medications and help with insulin management. I would involve Case Management to ensure home safety, caregiver support, transportation and possible more monitoring. I would also involve PT and OT, to get her moving and work on mobility and strength. Dietary and/or

Nutrition to assess Margarets nutritional needs and also carb counting for her diabetes.

Place your answers to these questions in the “**Unit 1: Overview CC dropbox**” by **1/7/2026 at 0800**. Be prepared to share and discuss your thoughts in class.

*In order to receive full credit (1 hour class time) for this assignment, it must be completed in its entirety by the due date/time assigned. Any assignments not completed in its entirety will result in missed class time and must be completed by the end of the semester to pass the course.*