

Unit 1: Overview of Critical Care Nursing

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?
As Margaret's nurse, I have significant concerns related to her situation. Especially focusing on her recent illness that she developed, chronic disease management, functional status both physically and neurologically, and her living situation. She presented to the ED with fever, weakness and fatigue that had been going on for several days causing her to stay in bed. To me I am very concerned about an infection, that could have led to sepsis due to her chronic foley catheter, limited mobility and lack of personal care. Not only is she at risk for infection, but also with limited mobility she has a high risk for skin breakdown, worsening functional decline, poor healing time, pneumonia, etc. Based off all the information gathered it seems there is also concerns of poor management of her chronic conditions/past medical history. She did not bring her medications with her and does not know the dosage of each. Which rises concern for medication noncompliance, lack of education, and that she is unable to manage her medications independently. Her limited support at home is one of my main concerns as this is likely the reason why she is in the state she is in. She lives alone and all her meals are from local take-out restaurants, which could be inappropriate for her chronic conditions. She receives assistance from an aid once a week for bathing and relies on private ambulance service for transportation. Overall, I feel that it is unsafe for her to be living at home alone, trying to take care of herself independently as this could be contributing to her decline.
- ▶ 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.
Upon communicating with Margaret, I would be assessing her cognitive status, pain, sleep, nutrition, getting to know more of her health conditions and the treatments, transportation, available support, etc. I would also speak with her POA and discuss Margaret's level of functioning alone, medication compliance, her home environment, and financial limitations while supporting both the patient and the POA.

Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.

Ethical issues that could be possible in this case come from Margaret having limited support and inadequate self-care. There could be concerns of beneficence, nonmaleficence, autonomy and justice. As a nurse my priority is keeping the patient's best interest in mind and preventing them from any harm.

► Discuss the legal issues this case presents.

Legal issues include patient safety, neglect, and possible false imprisonment. With her inability to care for herself much and not caring for her foley catheter that could have led to infection could constitute neglect. False imprisonment could be a possibility as she states she only leaves her apartment for medical appointments and must require others for basic needs. With her using an ambulation service for transportation this also could become a legal issue as it is not being used in an appropriate manner.

► In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?

As a nurse it is important that you advocate for your patients in any instance to provide the best patient centered care. For Margaret I would advocate for her by ensuring to perform all assessments in a thorough manner to be sure I am meeting all of her needs, I would advocate for appropriate treatment and prevention of future complications, I would provide education on medication compliance, foley care, nutrition and how to control her chronic diseases, and I would try to gather more information on her home safety and whether or not it's safe for her to live independently. Lastly, I would advocate for her by speaking with her POA and the aide that has been coming to help care for her once a week to gather more information to provide better care for Margaret.

► What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?

Teams I would involve is case management, social worker, patient advocacy, dietitian, PT/OT, transportation services, charge nurses and providers. By including all these departments in her care, it would ensure that all of the concerns and needs are met of the patient. From being able to coordinate/determine appropriate level of care, plan for discharge, assess living situation and financial resources, patient rights and concerns being addressed, manage dietary needs,

improve her mobility and functional ability, and provide safer and more appropriate transportation options.

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.