

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 a critical care nurse, I am concerned that she may have some infection going on due to her fever, severe fatigue, and weakness. I am concerned that she also has not been out of bed for the past several weeks due to feeling weak and having a fever. I am concerned about her medications as she does not have them with her, and she does not know the dosage of them. I am also a concerned critical care nurse because she has limited social support and no family and I am concerned about her returning home. I am also concerned about her health history and her current conditions and how those are affecting her and whether she is compliant with her medications.

- ▶ 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.
 - I would assess Margaret's health literacy and understanding throughout my assessment and her entire stay. I would use some teach back so I can get an understanding of how well she understands information. I would discuss with them both her current conditions and possibly the mention of an infection/sepsis. I would include a plan of care; I would make sure the Doctor gets labs so I could gather some more information on Margaret. I am guessing there may be some sort of antibiotic prescribed. I would check her sugar and get her vitals. I would review/ask her POA about code status, discuss safety concerns about living at home alone, and possibly look into some sort of facility where Margaret could stay full-time.

- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.
 - Autonomy presents in this case. I would want to make sure that I am respecting Margaret's wishes while making sure she has the ability to make those decisions along with her POA presents. Justice is an ethical issue that presents in this case. I would make sure she receives

appropriate care and resources despite lack of family support. Any treatment options that the Doctor recommends I would make sure she understands the treatments and that her POA is involved appropriately. Veracity is another one – making sure there is truth telling in the whole process of her stay.

- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.
 - I would want to make sure that proper verification and documentation of the POA is on file. Making sure that we are getting consent from POA for any treatment options. Making sure that I am complying with HIPAA, and making sure proper documentation and assessments are being made when caring for Margaret. Respecting Margaret's rights and treating her with dignity and respect and allowing her and her POA to make decisions privately and respect any wishes if she refuses any treatment.
- ▶ In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?

As Margaret's nurse I would make sure that she receives appropriate treatment in a timely manner due to her conditions/symptoms. This would include making sure we identify her infection early to minimize the risk associated with her catheter, and making sure she is receiving the appropriate medications. I would make sure I effectively communicate with Margaret and her POA, the healthcare team, and make sure any of their wishes are incorporated into my plan of care. I would prepare the POA for what they will see and experience while they are visiting. I would advocate for her by requesting any additional consultants she would need, any financial help, and looking into rehabs or a facility where she can stay full-time. I would also make sure that I am asking questions to the patient about her cultural/spiritual components that would affect her care, death, or dying. Asking her and her POA about religious practices/beliefs, and what is most important to them.
- ▶ What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?
 - Social work and case management would benefit Margaret for discharge planning, evaluation of long-term care needs, physical and occupational therapy, the possibility of consulting a nutritionist to help with healing and to help

her manage her diabetes. There's a possibility that urology would be consulted due to her foley. I think she needs to have her foley reevaluated

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.