

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? Some overall concerns I would have are concerning aspects of what brought her in first with the fever, fatigue, and weakness as well as her medical history of HTN, hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus, and the chronic foley. I would be concerned for a potential infection that could be occurring and would investigate other diseases associated with dwarfism to see if they could be an arising concern. I would be concerned about her living alone and having no family members as well as supporting her decisions in with her POA and trying to better understand the patient and their potential wishes. Another concern in this situation would be the diet and the impact on health and the potential side effects that could cause within the body. I would be concerned for the mental impact that the social isolation that she may be experiencing by not leaving her apartment unless she is going to an appointment. Finally, I would be worried about medications and if she is in fact taking the correct doses at home especially with only having health from a home health nurse once a week.
- ▶ 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 communicate with Margaret and her POA by explaining the situation and what might be occurring as well as incoming knowledge that can be explained to her. Topics that I could discuss include nutrition, turning in the bed, prevention of blood clots, pain management, education on health history/ current diseases and diagnosis, education on medication, resources that are available and referrals that will be made within the hospital to ensure adequate measures are taken to provide the resources.
- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.
Ethical issues this case presents are autonomy within the aspects of the patient making decision making and instead having her POA making choices for her. Within the healthcare system it is important to respect her choices as long as she is competent and able to make decisions for her care. Beneficence is also present within this scenario as she is medically in a state

where she is isolated and unable to care for herself and we must be able to ensure that she receives appropriate and adequate treatment. Justice is present with the patient's disability and the isolation that she is undergoing; it is important that her care is equal and appropriate to services and not less because of her disability.

- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.
Legal issues present in this case would be the POA only needing to step in and activate when the patient is deemed unable to make decisions about her health. Another area that would present in this scenario is the possible reporting of self-neglect being that she is disabled, social isolated, and possibly in a state to not care for herself. Other important factors could be the possibility of confidentiality being broken, informing the patient of their rights and the right to consent as well.
- ▶ In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?
I will advocate for Margaret by involving her POA, understanding her cultural and spiritual values, protect the health and safety of the patient, and respect and support basic rights and beliefs of Margaret.
- ▶ What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?
Other departments I would involve in Margaret's care are case management, dietitian/dietary, and pharmacy. Case management would help with resources for meals aiding in nutrition upon discharge as well as the availability to possibly attend rehab when leaving to rehabilitate the patient into a state to be able to attend appointments. A dietitian will help with education on proper meals and receiving adequate nutrition to aid in the health and wellness of the patient. Pharmacy can possibly look and see if she has a history of being within the hospital to find correct dosing and to help with making sure all medications are being taken at proper times, with the correct food/water, and that the medications can be taken together.

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.

