

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 the critical care nurse caring for this patient, I have many concerns. My main concern for her is that she has not been out of the house in three years and that she has been in bed for the last several days with a fever. Some of my other concerns include her lack of support, the home health aide only visiting once a week, her diet, and her weakness along with the severe fatigue. I am concerned she may have an infection.

- ▶ 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.
To communicate with the patient and her POA I would ask her to come to the hospital to go over some education so that everyone is on the same page. It would be important to discuss when to call her healthcare provider and what to do to prevent this from happening again. I would discuss the home health aide situation to see if they can have someone come out more often to help with bathing at least twice a week as well as recommending therapy to help her regain her strength. Another topic I would educate on is her diet. She does have Type 2 diabetes and eating take out is not the best option for her because it could worsen her diabetes. Medication compliance is also another topic I would educate on. If she cannot make food for herself or transfer in and out of bed a skilled nursing facility might be a better option for her so that she can be well taken care of.

- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.
An ethical issue that could arise from this case would be that the patient wants to return home, but her living situation will not change. The nurse ethically knows that it is wrong for a patient to go home with little to no help but legally they have the right to choose whether they want to return home or go to a facility.

- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.
A legal issue that could come from this case is neglect. This is because she has been bed bound for days, she has had a fever for multiple days and has had a decline in condition. These are obvious signs of neglect and since she has a foley catheter her condition could be linked to an infection due to improper foley care. Adult protective services may need to get involved in this case to see whether she meets the criteria for neglect. They may have to send her to a facility for her own well-being.
- ▶ In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?

I will serve as an advocate for Margaret by advocating for testing to be done to figure out the root cause of her fever and her other symptoms. I would also advocate for better living conditions for her, as well as advocating for better help that could take care of her more than once a week. I would also recommend her to receive therapy whether that is at a skilled facility or in home therapy. I would also advocate for her by consulting her to other departments.

- ▶ What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?
Other departments I would involve in this case include case management to help with discharge planning and figuring out placement if needed. I would consult therapy to help her regain the strength that she lost while she was sick. I would collaborate with the dietician to get her on a carb consistent diet and make sure she is educated on what she can and cannot eat as a type 2 diabetic. Finally, I would collaborate with pharmacy to make sure she can get her medications and educate her on the importance of taking them.

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.