

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, I have a few overall concerns with Margaret Mayfield's current health status and situation. I am mostly concerned with how she manages her chronic conditions at home. She is not familiar with her medication doses, and since she only has a home health aide come over once a week, it would leave her to self-administer medications for the other 6 days. If she cannot recall her medication doses, we can possibly assume she is not having medication adherence at home. I'm concerned with her psychosocial assessment, as she doesn't get out of the house much, nor has a big support system. Her diet is also a concern, as take-out from local restaurants is not the most nutritious and health-conscious choice considering her health history includes DM and hyperlipidemia.
- ▶ 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 her in a non-judgmental and understanding way, as I'm sure this is not a situation she would have preferred herself in. I would bring up concerns with her about her medication compliance, as well as providing additional medication information on why these medications are ordered. I would discuss concerns with the POA with the home health visiting frequency and bathing per week and possibly suggest getting a full-time caretaker or increasing the number of days. I would also discuss proper diet, to both the POA and the client.

- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.
One ethical issue this case presents is patient autonomy. As a nurse, you must weigh the benefits of allowing patient autonomy but also try to give them the care they need. If a home health nurse comes full time, Margaret may feel like her independence has been taken away from her, as she is used to being home alone. Another thing that can arise is an ethical dilemma between the POA and the nursing staff. They may both agree that she needs help, but how we achieve that help may cause disagreements or discrepancies.
- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.
Legal issues can involve the patient's right to privacy. As nurses, we have to be aware of information we may share, as well as considering the patient's

right to privacy about health-related information. We also need to provide the patient with information about any procedures, treatments or medications so they can provide informed consent.

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

I will serve as an advocate for Margaret by bringing up my concerns and assessments with her POA, discussing her condition with the Physician, providing culturally competent care, and providing discharge planning to both Margaret and the POA.

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

I would most likely involve a social worker to help set up more frequent home care for Margaret. I would like to consult PT and OT to help Margaret with tasks around the home, especially when she is presenting with weakness. I would send over a consultation to a dietician to help encourage a good diet for her chronic diseases and communicate with nurses and physicians who actively help care for Margaret on the floor.

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.