

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?**

I have numerous concerns for Ms. Mayfield, but specifically her overall status and situation. First, she lives at home by herself with chronic conditions that need daily intervention. She is having some sort of complication causing her to essentially be bedbound which puts her at increased risk for additional complications. I would guess that she is not in the best health weight and nutrition wise due to eating take out for every meal. I am concerned that home health only visits once a week not only because of the hygiene aspect but also the disability and chronic conditions she has. Having the disability and conditions that she does have it is important to know the medications and dosages to accurately care for her. It makes me nervous because I wonder if she is even getting any medication. Does home health only have the aide that comes to visit or is there a nurse that comes to administer her medications? The lack of mobility is also concerning because getting up and moving is important for everyday health, so only going out for appointments makes me wonder if there is a financial problem and she cannot get the extra support to assist with ADLs both in and outside of her home.

- ▶ **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 talk with the patient about her situation and her relationship with her POA and if she is comfortable with me updated her POA about her current admission. If so, I would call her friend to explain the situation, why she was admitted, ask how much she is involved with her friend's care, and give her the opportunity to share any pertinent information needed to help care for the patient better if applicable. I would ask about her disability and chronic conditions, how they affect her ADLs and ability to care for herself, and how much assistance does she need with those tasks. I would ask about her home health situation, specifically how in depth does the aide care for her, is she only coming to bath her? Is there a nurse that comes with the aide as well or multiple times a week. I would assess how she takes her medication at home and how much assistance she needs with medication administration if any. Asking about her nutrition is beneficial because I

would like to know if there is a financial issue in which she can only afford the takeout, is it more convenient, or a personal preference. I would discuss hygiene practices with her as well. I would discuss some opportunities the patient may be able to receive to better assist her in this time of need. Such as an assisted living facility until she can gain mobility back to move back home. Another option is still having home health but having more involvement meaning more visits from nurses, aides, OT/PT, and potentially a meal plan of some sort if possible. When discussing these ideas with the patient and POA, I would be nonjudgemental or bias and reassure the patient that it is her decision.

▶ **Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.**

An ethical issue that presents in this case is the patients sense of autonomy. It is important to respect the patient's decisions when it comes to the care she wants to receive, but it is important to consider her mental status and if she can make those decisions for herself. Some other ethical principles that come into play include beneficence, nonmaleficence, and fidelity. As I nurse, I want to do what is best for her by advocating for her to get the care she needs without doing any harm. Not getting accepted into an assisted living facility or getting home health to provide more care puts the patient at risk for more complications.

▶ **Discuss the legal issues this case presents.**

Some legal issues that presented in this case were related to confidentiality, patient right to privacy, and informed consent. With having a friend as a POA and not family but raise some concerns. If the patient was conscious, I would be able to ask if informing her POA is okay with her. But, due to her situation, she may not be able to answer the question to which I would have to go to her POA since she does not have any family. If she did not want her POA to know then that is where the legal issue lies. In addition, if she is not fully conscious, informed consent is not able to be accurately performed. Margaret not knowing her medications and dosing is a problem as well and if not accurately educated about the medications this could turn into a legal issue. Failure to provide appropriate resources to prevent complications and care for the patient can result in the legal issue of negligence.

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

I will serve as an advocate for Margaret by ensuring she is getting the right care she needs and deserves not only at the hospital but at home or an assisted living facility. If she has a financial issue I will work with my

charge nurse and do what we can to find resources, living facilities, a better home health agency, and fight with insurance companies, if necessary, in a respectful work manner. I will respect her decisions and do my best to fulfill her wishes as needed. This is her experience, so I am there to ensure she is taken care of in the way she wants to be taken care of, making sure others respect her wishes, and ensuring she can receive all resources necessary to maintain her chronic conditions and disability at home.

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

I would involve the doctor or physician to obtain orders from to better care for this patient. Collaboration with case management and/or the social workers would be beneficial to help with her living situation, finding out what services she needs, financial needs, and what life after discharge may entail. Consulting the dietician is another action I would take to assess what nutrition deficiencies she has, what diet may benefit her, and resources to assist with adequate nutrition at home. The nursing aides are there to help with hygiene practices, feedings, and mobility. PT and OT would be able to assist her with rehab to move her in the direction of getting some mobility back after being bedbound for multiple days. I would also work with charge to see if home health is able to adjust their care for the patient if able to better suit her and her situation.

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.