Quality Improvement in Nursing

Samjhana Rai

Lakeview College of Nursing

Course N434

Professor Whisman

Jun 13th, 2025

QSEN Competencies and Evidence-Based Practice

The report by the Institute of Medicine titled, To Err is Human, has initiated sweeping changes in the field of healthcare. This accident stimulated the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses project that transformed the work with patients by nursing students and professionals. QSEN skills indicate that the individual healthcare paradigm must be replaced by a team-based one that prioritizes care improvement, safety, and evidence-based decision-making. Since QSEN concepts were introduced, quality improvement in nursing has evolved, including its role in nursing education and healthcare practice.

Article Summary

The QSEN initiative, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2005, can be considered one of the most significant reforms in nursing education. Dr. Linda Cronin-Wet and other nursing leaders founded the program when they noticed a requirement to enhance quality and safety in nursing education. The initiative was based on the Institute of Medicine's five core competencies and introduced safety as a new competency created especially for nursing practice (Disch & Barnsteiner, 2021). Patient-centered care, teamwork and collaboration, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, safety, and informatics are the core skills required in modern nursing education and practice. The QSEN movement has undergone several stages, beginning with a focus on competencies, followed by trials in schools, faculty development, and culminating in the establishment of regional centers and the advancement of competencies. Nursing schools nationwide utilize the program, which is reflected in the AACN Essentials, and the recognition of it by specialty nursing groups demonstrates its success (Disch & Barnsteiner, 2021). The program has created a new culture in which nurses continually think of innovative alternatives to improve the health system and are viewed as active participants.

Introduction

Quality improvement in nursing is based on the notion that healthcare is a complex undertaking requiring a systematic approach to achieve the most desirable patient outcomes. QSEN skills help nurses practice in the contemporary healthcare system. Such competencies indicate that quality improvement is a significant feature of nursing. Competency-based education is quite a change in terms of merely learning to do things to developing Advanced Placement skills of critical thinking, learning how various systems operate, and working with others. It acknowledges that to be able to manage current healthcare challenges within organizations; they need nurses who are able to operate within various levels of the organization, apply technology successfully, and remain able to learn and develop. Through the QSEN initiative, nursing educators are now able to teach quality and safety with the same tools and language, irrespective of where they work or the nursing field they are teaching.

Overview

The QSEN skills cover various aspects of nursing care, nursing team leadership, as well as nursing system quality improvement. It is a philosophy of healthcare that entails recognizing and appreciating what patients want, believe, and require and administering incorporated and empathetic care (Houser, 2023). The idea of teamwork and team spirit within the healthcare domain is that the sphere is improved when the professionals collaborate, share information freely, and make informed decisions. In evidence-based practice, nurses apply research and best practice in their interventions. In quality improvement, they use data and frequent procedures to better how care is given. Safety competencies can help keep patients safe through the application of skills and system changes, while informatics competencies enable nurses to utilize technology and information systems in delivering care (Disch & Barnsteiner, 2021). The combination of

these skills makes nursing education a holistic endeavor that equips practitioners with the challenges presented by the current healthcare environment. Its use has become standard among nursing programs in the United States and around the world, and it can be used anywhere due to its translations into other languages.

Quality Improvement

Quality improvement requires using data to track care outcomes and continually applying various methods to enhance healthcare. Nurses will learn to collect and analyze data, create process maps, investigate issues, and use evidence-based methods (Disch & Barnsteiner, 2021). The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle helps medical institutions test and implement novel changes. Nurses must understand that care delivery and outcomes can have adverse effects on patients. This skill emphasizes the need to provide secure environments where healthcare professionals may raise concerns and participate in improvement without fear of repercussions (QSEN, 2022). Nursing quality improvement encompasses unit, organizational, and system-level efforts aimed at addressing complex healthcare issues. Nurses must also understand their role in the healthcare system and how their actions impact the organization and patients (Houser, 2023). Florence Nightingale developed this strategy and promotes it in QSEN education today, changing nursing from one-on-one patient care.

Application to Nursing

To implement QSEN competencies in nursing, nurses will need to reorient their approach to work and professional growth, as they are traditionally oriented. The skills need to be applied by nurses in every area of work, both when providing direct care to patients and when working in administration, therefore creating a comprehensive paradigm of professional success. The implementation of the QSEN principles supports nursing practice and helps integrate three key

concepts: patient safety, high-quality outcomes, and continuous improvement (QSEN, 2022). When nurses apply QSEN competencies, they reason more effectively, communicate more clearly, and consider factors influencing patient care at a systems level. The competencies provide a clear path for professional growth, supporting ongoing learning and adaptation to new healthcare trends. To implement QSEN in practice, organizations must have sufficient resources, provide training, and be committed to enhancing the quality and safety of their leaders (Disch & Barnsteiner, 2021). Many initiatives, including the VA Quality Scholars Program, have demonstrated the practical application of these competencies in training interprofessional fellows to utilize improvement science and practical strategies.

Practice

QSEN competencies are applied in clinical practice through different initiatives and programs to improve patient safety and care quality. Applying these competencies, nurses are vigilant for safety issues, participate in team rounds and quality projects, and rely on research-based guidelines to inform their actions (Houser, 2023). The competencies prepare nurses to advocate for patients and families, as well as participate in improving the organization. Standardized communication methods, such as SBAR, following checklists and protocols to maintain consistent care steps, and integrating technology for safe medication use and documentation are all practical applications (QSEN, 2022). The overall effect of QSEN on nursing practice includes improved patient outcomes, reduced errors, and increased job satisfaction among nurses.

Education

QSEN skills are transforming nursing education. A range of topics, from introductory lessons to advanced clinical practice, now include these competencies in school curricula.

Development programs for staff have been crucial for the successful implementation of quality and safety concepts (QSEN, 2022), as they enable teachers to enhance their understanding of these concepts. The QSEN repository features reviewed educational tools to assist faculty in designing practical and innovative approaches to learning competencies (Houser, 2023). Simulation-based learning has become valuable for students to develop QSEN skills, identify and address quality and safety concerns, and practice in a safe environment. There is a stronger connection between universities and hospitals, which enables students to witness and participate in real-life quality improvement activities (Houser, 2023). Today, assessment methods examine how knowledge is acquired and how attitudes and skills are developed for quality and safety. QSEN competencies shape nursing education in many institutions and influence accreditation, licensing tests, and ongoing education requirements. The advanced skills acquired in graduate programs enable nurses to assume leadership roles in enhancing quality and patient safety.

Research

Research on QSEN competencies has been conducted since the initiative began, focusing on how to apply them, measure their results, and how they influence patient outcomes. Several studies have investigated the impact of simulated practice, case discussions, and hands-on experiences on the development of QSEN competencies (QSEN, 2022). The impact of nurses trained through QSEN on patient safety has also been studied, with researchers showing that this initiative has contributed to improved metrics, fewer mistakes, and higher quality of care in QSEN-compliant organizations (Houser, 2023). The Systems Thinking Scale has now made it possible to assess how effective interventions are and how competency has changed over the years. Implementation science has allowed its researchers to learn what makes it easier or harder to apply QSEN in both learning and the workplace. Researchers have also followed the career

moves of QSEN-prepared nurses to examine the duration of time they retained their training, their work satisfaction, and their career progression. Investigations of QSEN competencies have taken place at healthcare facilities worldwide, enabling individuals across various sectors to gain knowledge about quality and safety (QSEN, 2022). Further research is necessary on the impact of developing technology on QSEN, the connection between QSEN and healthcare equality, and the promotion of advanced skills associated with different nursing roles.

Conclusion

Nurses can now better address healthcare system concerns due to the QSEN skills, which have influenced nursing education and practice. The effort demonstrates that teamwork, research-driven training, and well-planned improvements can lead to breakthroughs in professional practice. Healthcare workers' job satisfaction, patient outcomes, and teamwork have improved with the implementation of QSEN competencies in nursing education and practice. Nursing has led the push to enhance healthcare quality and safety via system thinking and continuous improvement. QSEN competencies help healthcare providers address new challenges and deliver patient-centered, evidence-based care. The development of advanced abilities and international QSEN applications make the effort current and noteworthy. Everyone must commit, resources must be available, and leaders must be involved for QSEN implementation to succeed. Future policy should promote healthcare equity, new technology, and specialty expertise. The QSEN legacy suggests that nursing is now focused on continuous improvement, patient safety, and the broader perspective, which will be crucial to the profession.

References

Disch, J., & Barnsteiner, J. (2021). QSEN in an Amazon World. *AJN, American Journal of Nursing*, *121*(3), 40–46. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.naj.0000737176.16228.97

Houser, J. (2023). *Nursing research: Reading, using, and creating evidence (5th ed.)*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.

QSEN. (2022). *QSEN Competencies*. Quality and Safety Education for Nurses. https://www.qsen.org/competencies-pre-licensure-ksas