

Patient Care and Safety: Literature Review

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N434: Evidence-Based Practice

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July 10, 2025

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Patient care and safety are two of the main pillars of healthcare, helping to directly influence patient care outcomes and satisfaction. Ensuring high-quality care while minimizing risks and harm is a key focus in hospitals and the healthcare system. A literature review discusses published information about a specific area in a subject. Focuses on one specific aspect of the topic and expands the research on that specific point (American University Library, 2025). A literature review can be very beneficial to patient care and safety; it can narrow down to a specific aspect and focus on that and expand upon it. It provides a great review on the topic, so that the reader can see the strengths and weaknesses of that area and investigate what more can be done (American University Library, 2025). One area that nursing and the healthcare field continuously review is patient safety. A specific area that can impact safety is nurse to patient ratios. Nurse-to-patient ratios is the number of patients assigned to one nurse at a time. If a nurse is assigned many critical patients, the nurse must assess and then prioritize the most crucial first. This can cause a delay in another patient's care, which can lead to a deterioration of the patient's care. Reviewing the literature on nurse-to-patient ratios is an important step in ensuring continued growth and safety. The following are studies related to safety and nursing ratios.

Nurse Staffing and Patient-Perceived Quality of Nursing Care

Nurses are responsible for delivering the highest level of care to patients in the hospital. As a main contributor to the quality of care in the hospital, nurses work effectively and efficiently to provide high-quality care (Winter et al., 2021). This quantitative research article examined the importance of the nurse-to-patient ratio and its effects on patient quality and safety. The article also discussed the significant effects of nurse staffing on pneumonia, pressure ulcers, and mortality (Winter et al., 2021). Patients evaluated the care they received from the nurse, including but not limited to attentiveness, responsiveness, and communication, to their individual needs. Based on patient responses and administrative data, the study demonstrates the impact of nurse staffing on patient-perceived quality of nursing care (Winter et al., 2021).

Key Points

The study uses a cross-sectional analysis using a survey and administrative data to assess the relationship between nurse staffing and the quality of nursing care perceived by patients (Winter et al., 2021). The survey contacted 212,554 patients discharged from a non-pediatric, non-intensive, and non-psychiatric hospital unit in Germany. With a requirement of a minimum stay of at least two nights between January and October 2019. Of those, 30,174 patients responded, resulting in a response rate of 14.2 percent (Winter et al., 2021). The survey found that both nurse staffing levels and nursing skill mix are important for providing high-quality nursing care according to the patients' perspective. Both factors should be considered when implementing and designing new policies, such as minimum staffing regulations, to help improve the quality of nursing care (Winter et al., 2021). The regression analysis revealed that for the variable mean-centered patient-to-nurse ratio, with a p-value of 0.002 for general nursing care, 0.018 for guidance, and <0.001 for loyalty. These levels all strongly affected how patients rated their care.

The results showed significant statistical data, except in a rural location where patients' loyalty wasn't impacted (Winter et al.,2021).

Assumptions

Nurse staffing levels help play a critical role in patient safety and patient satisfaction. According to the research, lower patient-to-nurse ratios are linked to better patient outcomes (Winter et al.,2021). Nurses who work in a better-staffed and better-skilled unit are more likely to work more effectively and efficiently (Winter et al.,2021). This research shows that when nurses have fewer patients, they have more time to spend with each patient, helping to reduce the risk of errors. Therefore, it is essential to improve nurse staffing for quality and safety (Winter et al.,2021).

Deficit/Conclusion

The researchers' line of reasoning is crucial to the healthcare system. If nurses are not staffed adequately, patient outcomes can decrease, and so can the risks for errors. Implications for this research are that patients are not only at risk for falls but also at risk for pneumonia, pressure ulcers, and mortality (Winter et al.,2021). If the healthcare community refuses to step up and provide new policies on the patient-to-nurse ratios, there could be a greater decrease in patient outcomes and satisfaction.

References

American University. (2025). Literature reviews. University Library.

<https://subjectguides.library.american.edu/literaturereview>

Winter, V., Dietermann, K., Schneider, U., & Schreyögg, J. (2021). Nurse staffing and patient-perceived quality of nursing care: A cross-sectional analysis of survey and administrative data in German hospitals. *BMJ open*. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8578983/>