The role of standardised nursing languages in representing nursing and supporting nurses as knowledge workers

av

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ABSTRACT


Nurses are increasingly referred to as knowledge workers who make complex clinical decisions in the care of patients where nursing documentation plays a role. The overall aim of this thesis was to study applicability, content, completeness, comprehensiveness and accuracy of recorded nursing data based on standardised nursing languages in health records.

Study A (I) was a survey performed in a sample of 198 nurses on their estimated use of the Nursing Interventions Classification (NIC) in clinical practice. Study B (II-IV) was an evaluation study with a cross-sectional design in which patient records were audited pre (n=355) and post (n=349 and n=304) implementation of standardised nursing languages in a university hospital. Study C (V) was a retrospective audit of 45 records of patients with pressure ulcers.

Nurses seemed to find nursing interventions in the NIC to be applicable in describing nursing practice (I). An implementation programme increased and improved documentation of all elements of the nursing process in clinical practice and was used as a structure for documentation (II). Nursing specialties could be identified in the relationships between nursing diagnoses and interventions when standardised nursing languages were used (III). The use of standardised nursing languages improved nursing content in nursing care plans, especially in electronic care plans (IV). Patient records proved not to be a reliable source with respect to pressure ulcers in that they lacked accuracy, completeness and comprehensiveness (V).

The conclusions are that when the nursing process structure is combined with use of the standardised nursing languages and information technology (IT) with knowledge sources that support clinical decision making, documentation in clinical practice can be improved. The clinical implications are that standardised nursing languages together with IT need to be used to capture, store and retrieve nursing data for re-use to benefit nursing research, quality, safety and policy making in health care. Further, increased awareness is needed among nurses regarding the quality and accuracy of nursing documentation.

Keywords: knowledge worker, nursing documentation, nursing informatics, nursing process, standardised nursing languages

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