

The perception of nurses concerning computerised handover and its influence on the quality of patient care

ABSTRACT

Background: Nursing handover communications play an important role in ensuring the quality of care of patients.

Aim: To understand the perception of Malaysian nurses concerning computerised handover and its influence on the quality of patient care.

Materials and Methods: Focus group discussions (FGDs) were formed to elicit multiple opinions on topics related to computerised nursing handover. Twelve registered nurses from a public hospital in Malaysia were recruited for three groups of FGD. Conventional qualitative content analysis was used to derive the codes and themes directly from the data. The NVivo 10 software package was used to assist in coding, categorising, and constructing themes.

Result: Four main themes were identified: (1) decreased nursing workload, (2) increased nursing workload, (3) technical problems related to computer that reduced work efficiency, (4) unpleasant effect from computerised nursing handover that jeopardised patient safety.

Conclusion: Computerised nursing handover decreased the workload of nurses in some aspects, but also increased it due to duplicate charting. Technical problems related to computer hindered the smoothness of running a computerised nursing handover. The computerised nursing handover compromised the quality of care of patients when nurses copy and pasted patient clinical information carelessly, which exposed nurses to legal and/or ethical risk. Additionally, the prolonged use of computerised structured contents reduced nurses' critical thinking skills in constructing and planning patient care. Nursing leadership is required to supervise the administrative process of the computerised nursing handover. Nursing continual education on patient care should be designed periodically on the ward to improve the critical thinking of nurses.

Keyword: Qualitative research; Perception; Handover; Quality of patient care