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Missed nursing care, patient outcomes and care outcomes in selected hospitals in Southern Nigeria

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Background: Nurse shortage cause omission of less critical nursing tasks by nurses.

Aim: To examine the nature and prevalence of missed care; and assess relationship between missed care and selected care outcomes.

Methods: Mixed method of descriptive and intervention was used. 186 nurses providing direct adult care in 4 hospitals, and 120 patients were enrolled. Ethical clearance was obtained from the HREC of Cross River State Ministry of Health. Nurses identified activities omitted in part or whole, or delayed in the previous 7 days from a validated list of required care activities like intervention comprised capacity building on certain care issues. Data were collected through researcher-developed and validated questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data on SPSS 18.0.

Results: Most nurses (83.9%) reported that they had left one or more care activities undone. At post-test experimental group mean reduced significantly. Care most missed were routine bath (34.9%), spiritual support (33.9%), assessing effectiveness of pain medication (28.0%), patient education (26.3%), pain assessment before administering medication (25.8%), etc. Others like chronic wound care and updating care plans were delayed but not totally missed. After intervention both prevalence and overall means of missed care for experimental group reduced significantly ($p=0.001$). Missed care was significantly related to all outcomes. Higher mean scores on missed care were related with poor rating of outcomes, while lower means were related with good outcomes. Study did not consider staffing levels.

Conclusion: Nurses reported that they frequently left “non-critical” care activities undone. Closer supervision is required to reduce missed care in staff.

Biography

Mildred E John is a registered Nurse, registered Midwife, and registered Nurse Educator with a BSN and PhD. With over 30 years as a Teacher of nurses, she has acquired knowledge, skills and disposition for capacity building. She has 56 publications, 48 of which are research-based. She has served as the Head of Department, Dean of Faculty and member of the Board of the Nursing & Midwifery Council of Nigeria. She is the current President of the Association of University Nursing programmes in Nigeria.

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