Improving Medication Education for the Float Nurse

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BACKGROUND

Float nurses are necessary for aiding in staff shortages in the hospital setting. Time may pass before returning to a unit and administering that floor's commonly used drugs. This time-lapse causes reduced nurse confidence, increased medication errors, adverse events, and decreased patient trust and outcomes.

- Researchers determined that nurses had insufficient knowledge of the drugs they used most frequently, which caused more significant medication errors (3).
- Research shows that 1% to 2% of hospitalized patients are affected by medication errors, while adverse drug events harm nearly 5% (2).
- Research has found that providing a reference guide aids in promoting medication safety, increasing nurse satisfaction, minimizing drug errors, and improving patient care (4).

METHODS

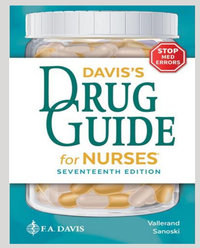
Nurses who work in the same unit have insufficient knowledge of the drugs they commonly administer (3). This knowledge gap correlates with a significant number of medication errors (3). Prevention of medication administration errors is critical to ensure the safety of patients; although a complex and multifaceted issue, it is critical to make medication administration guidelines available for nurses (6).

Using the Iowa model improves nurses' EBP capacity and potential by ensuring that the way they work in their field is research-based and appropriate for implementation in practice (5). Utilizing this model requires encouraging the active participation of nurses in the involved unit, having supportive leadership, and integrating the pilot EBP innovation in routine procedures to sustain EBP intervention effectively (1).

EVALUATION

This MSN project aims to bridge the knowledge deficit amongst nurses on commonly administered medications, which can be even more challenging for float nurses who sporadically use unit-specific drugs. After consulting with the float pool manager and obtaining approval, an in-service with the implementation objective will be announced. Effectiveness will be measured using the following resources:

- Pre-survey questionnaire
- Medication education brochure
- Unit-specific medication reference guide
- Compact reference sheet
- Post survey



Evaluation of this project will determine modification and implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

Evidence-based literature indicates that medication errors occur even among commonly administered medications. This project will provide float nurses with the necessary tools and training to efficiently and effectively administer medications to varying patient populations. With continuing education, additional resources, and more accessible information, nurses will feel more confident administering medications. Reinforcing and providing tools to increase nurse confidence supports staff, decreases adverse events, and improves patient outcomes.

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Figures
“Stressed Nurse” by Charday Penn / E+ / Getty Images.
“Davis’s Drug Guide for Nurses” by Vallerand and Sanoski.
“Confident Nurse” by Post University.