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Exploring Nurses' Perceptions and Challenges in Caring for Resuscitated Patients: Insights into Roles, Attitudes, and Outcomes

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ABSTRACT
Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is a critical life-saving intervention for cardiac arrest patients, with nurses playing a pivotal role in its success. Nurses' perceptions of resuscitated patients are shaped by their experiences, knowledge, attitudes, and the challenges they encounter during and after resuscitation efforts. This article examines nurses' perceptions of resuscitated patients, highlighting the emotional, ethical, and organizational factors influencing their attitudes and performance. The role of nurses in CPR is explored, with particular emphasis on their responsibilities as first responders, team members, and post-resuscitation caregivers. Challenges such as emotional distress, resource limitations, and ethical dilemmas are analyzed, alongside factors that shape nurses' perceptions, including workplace environments, training, and patient outcomes. Strategies for improving nurses' perceptions and experiences are discussed, including enhancing education, fostering supportive environments, and addressing emotional and ethical barriers. The article underscores the importance of empowering nurses to improve CPR outcomes and outlines future research directions to further understand their perspectives.

Keywords: environments, training, perception, future

INTRODUCTION

Cardiac arrest is a medical emergency requiring immediate intervention to restore circulation and oxygenation. In-hospital cardiac arrest (IHCA) affects thousands of patients annually, with survival rates varying significantly across healthcare settings (Andersen et al., 2019). Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is a critical response to cardiac arrest, and nurses play a central role in its success. As frontline healthcare providers, nurses are often the first to respond to cardiac arrest, initiating CPR and coordinating with resuscitation teams while ensuring continuity of care after resuscitation. Their perceptions of resuscitated patients, shaped by clinical experiences, emotional responses, and ethical considerations, can significantly influence their performance during resuscitation efforts and their engagement in post-resuscitation care.

The success of CPR depends not only on technical proficiency but also on the attitudes and perceptions of the healthcare team. Nurses' perceptions are influenced by various factors, including their knowledge, training, workplace environment, and the outcomes of resuscitated patients. Positive perceptions can enhance their confidence and motivation, while negative experiences, such as poor patient outcomes or ethical challenges, can

lead to moral distress and burnout (Guetterman et al., 2019). Understanding these perceptions is essential for improving resuscitation outcomes, fostering nurse well-being, and enhancing the overall quality of care.

Despite the critical role of nurses in resuscitation, limited research has focused on their perceptions of resuscitated patients. Existing studies highlight the emotional and psychological challenges nurses face during resuscitation, as well as the organizational and ethical barriers that impact their performance (Haydon et al., 2017; Janatolmakan et al., 2021). This article aims to explore nurses' perceptions of resuscitated patients, examining the factors shaping their attitudes and the challenges they encounter. In doing so, it seeks to identify strategies to improve nurse experiences, patient outcomes, and the quality of resuscitation care.

Nurses' Perceptions Towards Resuscitated Patients

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is an essential life-saving procedure performed during cardiac arrest to restore circulation and oxygenation. Nurses, as frontline responders, play a central role in the success of CPR and the recovery of resuscitated patients. Their perceptions toward patients who survive resuscitation are shaped by their experiences, emotions, attitudes, and knowledge. These perceptions significantly influence their performance during resuscitations and their approach to post-resuscitation care. Understanding nurses' perceptions is crucial for improving patient outcomes, enhancing the quality of care, and addressing the emotional and ethical challenges associated with resuscitation. This article provides an in-depth exploration of nurses' perceptions toward resuscitated patients, the challenges they face, and strategies for improving their experiences and attitudes.

The Role of Nurses in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

Nurses are critical to the resuscitation process, often serving as the first responders to in-hospital cardiac arrest (IHCA). Their role extends from initiating CPR to coordinating with multidisciplinary teams and providing post-resuscitation care. According to Guetterman et al. (2019), nurses in high-performing hospitals are empowered to act as leaders during resuscitation efforts, taking on roles such as bedside defibrillation and advanced life support procedures. In contrast, nurses in lower-performing hospitals often face limitations due to restrictive roles, inadequate training, and insufficient organizational support, which can hinder their ability to provide effective care.

McHugh et al. (2016) emphasized the correlation between adequate nurse staffing, supportive work environments, and improved IHCA survival rates. Their findings highlight that hospitals with better nurse-to-patient ratios and positive workplace culture report better outcomes, as nurses are better equipped to respond promptly and efficiently to cardiac arrests. Proper training, knowledge, and team coordination are essential components of successful resuscitation efforts, and nurses' perceptions of their roles are deeply influenced by these factors.

Nurses' Attitudes Toward Resuscitation and Resuscitated Patients

Positive Attitudes and Their Impact

Nurses' attitudes toward CPR and resuscitated patients play a critical role in the success of resuscitation efforts. Positive attitudes are associated with greater confidence, willingness to participate in resuscitation, and adherence to clinical protocols. Gebreegziabher Gebremedhn et al. (2017) found that while most graduate health professionals understand the importance of CPR, many lack the confidence and technical skills required to perform it effectively. This gap between knowledge and practical skills underscores the need for ongoing training and support to foster positive perceptions and improve performance.

Positive attitudes toward resuscitated patients are often linked to the belief that resuscitation is a meaningful and effective intervention, particularly when patients achieve favorable neurological outcomes. When nurses perceive that their efforts can lead to meaningful recovery, they are more likely to view their role in resuscitation positively and invest effort into providing high-quality care.

Challenges with Negative Attitudes

Negative attitudes toward resuscitation can emerge when nurses experience stress, burnout, or moral distress. Elmer et al. (2016) highlighted the emotional burden of withdrawing life-sustaining therapy in patients with poor neurological prognoses. When nurses repeatedly witness poor outcomes, such as deaths or severe neurological impairments, they may develop feelings of futility regarding resuscitation efforts. This can lead to reluctance to engage in future resuscitations or a diminished sense of purpose in their work.

Additionally, nurses may struggle with ethical dilemmas during resuscitation, such as whether to continue CPR in cases with low survival likelihood. These situations can evoke feelings of guilt and helplessness, further contributing to negative attitudes. Addressing these emotional and ethical challenges is essential for fostering more positive perceptions among nurses.

Challenges Faced by Nurses During Resuscitation

1. Emotional and Psychological Challenges

Resuscitation is an emotionally charged process, particularly when outcomes are unfavorable. Nurses are often at the forefront of witnessing the physical and emotional toll of cardiac arrest on patients and their families. Haydon et al. (2017) conducted an integrative review examining survivors' quality of life after CPR and found that many patients face long-term health challenges, including cognitive impairments and emotional distress. Nurses who provide care to these patients may feel a sense of responsibility for their well-being and experience emotional exhaustion, especially when patients fail to recover.

Elmer et al. (2016) emphasized that nurses often face significant psychological stress when caring for resuscitated patients with poor prognoses. The early withdrawal of life-sustaining therapies based on perceived neurological outcomes can create moral dilemmas and feelings of loss. These experiences can lead to compassion fatigue, affecting nurses' ability to care for other patients effectively.

2. Barriers to Effective Resuscitation

Barriers such as inadequate training, insufficient resources, and poor communication among resuscitation team members can hinder the success of CPR efforts. Janatolmakan et al. (2021) identified these challenges as significant contributors to low resuscitation success rates in resource-limited settings. Nurses often report feeling unprepared to manage complex resuscitation scenarios due to gaps in their training or lack of access to essential equipment, such as defibrillators.

In addition to resource limitations, organizational barriers, such as hierarchical decision-making structures, can prevent nurses from fully utilizing their skills during resuscitation. Guetterman et al. (2019) noted that nurses in lower-performing hospitals were less likely to receive organizational support and training, which negatively impacted their confidence and effectiveness during resuscitation efforts.

3. Ethical Dilemmas

Ethical dilemmas are common in resuscitation, particularly when deciding whether to continue or terminate efforts. Mentzelopoulos et al. (2021) discussed the ethical complexities surrounding resuscitation, including end-of-life decisions and resource allocation. Nurses may feel conflicted when performing CPR on patients with advanced age, terminal illnesses, or poor prognoses, as these cases often raise questions about the appropriateness of aggressive interventions.

Laventhal et al. (2020) explored the ethical challenges faced by healthcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly concerning resource allocation. These challenges can exacerbate moral distress among nurses, affecting their perceptions of resuscitation efforts and their ability to provide compassionate care.

Factors Influencing Nurses' Perceptions

1. Knowledge and Training

Adequate knowledge and training are essential for shaping nurses' perceptions of resuscitation. Bircher et al. (2019) emphasized that timely administration of CPR, defibrillation, and epinephrine significantly improves survival rates. Nurses with up-to-date training are more likely to feel confident in their ability to perform resuscitation effectively and view it as a valuable intervention.

Pettersen et al. (2018) highlighted significant gaps in European cardiovascular nurses' knowledge and skills related to CPR. Regular training programs and simulation exercises can help bridge these gaps and improve nurses' perceptions of their roles during resuscitation.

2. Workplace Environment

The workplace environment significantly influences nurses' attitudes toward resuscitation. Supportive environments characterized by adequate staffing, access to resources, and collaborative teamwork foster positive perceptions and enhance nurses' ability to provide high-quality care. McHugh et al. (2016) found that hospitals with better nurse-to-patient ratios and positive work environments reported higher IHCA survival rates, as nurses were better equipped to respond promptly to cardiac arrests.

Conversely, poorly organized environments with insufficient staffing and resources can lead to increased stress and negative perceptions among nurses. Addressing these systemic challenges is critical for improving nurses' experiences and attitudes.

3. Patient Outcomes

Patient outcomes play a pivotal role in shaping nurses' perceptions of resuscitation. Positive outcomes, such as survival to discharge with favorable neurological status, reinforce nurses' belief in the value of CPR. Goodarzi et al. (2022) reported a survival-to-discharge rate of 5.2% among IHCA patients in Iran, with favorable neurological outcomes in 82.69% of survivors. These findings highlight the importance of effective post-resuscitation care in improving patient outcomes and nurses' perceptions.

However, when outcomes are unfavorable, such as deaths or severe impairments, nurses may experience feelings of futility and doubt about the effectiveness of resuscitation. These experiences can negatively impact their willingness to participate in future resuscitations.

Improving Nurses' Perceptions and Experiences

1. Enhancing Training and Education

Regular training programs and simulations are essential for improving nurses' knowledge, skills, and confidence in performing CPR. Kang (2019) emphasized the importance of post-cardiac arrest syndrome management training in improving patient outcomes. Training should address both technical and non-technical skills, such as communication, teamwork, and decision-making under pressure.

2. Promoting Supportive Work Environments

Hospitals should prioritize creating supportive work environments that empower nurses and foster collaboration. Adequate staffing, access to resources, and recognition of nurses' contributions can enhance their perceptions of resuscitation efforts and patient outcomes. McHugh et al. (2016) highlighted the positive impact of nurse-friendly work environments on IHCA survival rates.

3. Addressing Emotional and Ethical Challenges

Hospitals should provide emotional support and counseling services for nurses involved in resuscitation efforts. Debriefing sessions and mentoring programs can help nurses process their emotions and cope with the psychological challenges of resuscitation. Ethical training and frameworks can guide nurses in navigating complex resuscitation scenarios and making informed decisions (Mentzelopoulos et al., 2021).

4. Improving Post-Resuscitation Care

Post-resuscitation care is critical for improving patient outcomes and nurses' perceptions. Nolan et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of integrated care bundles, including targeted temperature management and neurological monitoring, in enhancing recovery after cardiac arrest. Nurses should be actively involved in post-resuscitation care to ensure continuity and quality of care.

Future Research Directions

Future research should explore the long-term experiences of nurses involved in resuscitation efforts, focusing on emotional well-being, workplace challenges, and ethical dilemmas. Qualitative studies can provide deeper insights into nurses' perceptions and identify strategies for addressing the barriers they face. Additionally, research on the impact of training programs and supportive work environments on nurses' attitudes and performance can inform interventions to improve resuscitation outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Nurses' perceptions toward resuscitated patients are shaped by their experiences, emotions, and workplace environments. While nurses recognize the importance of CPR, they face numerous challenges, including emotional distress, ethical dilemmas, and systemic barriers. Addressing these factors through enhanced training, supportive work environments, and improved post-resuscitation care can empower nurses and improve outcomes for resuscitated patients. By fostering positive perceptions and addressing the challenges nurses face, healthcare systems can enhance the quality of care and the overall success of resuscitation efforts.

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