Article Review

Name

Institution Affiliation

Abstract

Allocation of resources required to deliver quality care services in a primary duty of chief nursing officers and nurse managers. However, when it comes to staffing, it may be difficult to know how to allocate human resources that patients depend on for care. Acuity may be defined as the level intensity of care needed by a patient. An acuity-based staffing controls the number of nurses that needs to be on shift depending on the needs of patients and not according to the number of patients. The use of acuity tool is an important area of study because it aids in staffing and ensuring patient safety. It can be of help to a nurse manager in determining the best staffing pattern that is suitable for every shift according to the patient data. The system at one time relied on paper checklists that could be filled out by every nurse to help in assessing the needs of the patients. However, in the current world, the specialized software makes the process faster as well as more accurate.

Summary

1. Ave, E. (2015). Acuity-Based Staffing as the Key to Hospital Competitiveness. *Frost & Sullivan*, *1*. http://www.quadramed.com/downloads/Acuity-Based-Staffing-as-the-Key-to-Hospital-Competitiveness\_white-paper.pdf

The article titled “Acuity-Based Staffing as the Key to Hospital Competitiveness” by Evelyn Ave provides an evaluation of Acuity-Based Staffing, being the optimal management tool for nurse staffing. It generally focuses on how Acuity-Based Staffing directly influences hospital competitiveness through three dimensions. The three dimensions include maintaining a committed and stable nurse workforce, achieving quality patient outcomes and managing nurse staffing costs effectively. The tool is becoming the standard tool in health centers for managing valuable nursing resources in order to deliver quality care. The article highlights various solutions of acuity-based staffing. The solutions can be summarized as patient classification approach that is evidence-based, benchmarking database for comparing performance, sophisticated forecasting capabilities, management reporting capabilities, and ability to access complexity of a patient and give evidence-based recommendations. Management of nursing staff, costs as well as quality care has been established by the article vital to the financial viability and also market competitiveness.

The article associates the leading hospitals in terms of competitiveness to acuity-based staffing and other technology solutions. The competitiveness is attained through proper management of quality delivery and costs which are linked directly to patient care. The Acuity-based staffing systems enable the staffing to be efficient, proactive, prospective and fiscally responsible since nurses are able to feel involved in staffing decisions, offer quality bedside care and improve their skills in acuity assessment. The article also recognizes the acuity-based staffing as the foundation of a new age of CNO and also CFO partnerships which supports quality of care, cost management and safety the highest level possible. The tool valuably augments knowledge and judgment among nurses and ensures accurate as well as safe stuffing. The article concludes that acuity-based staffing is central in ensuring a stable workforce, quality patient outcomes, and financial viability, hence leading to overall hospital competitiveness (Ave, 2015).

1. Kidd, M., Grove, K., & Taylor, A. (2014). A new patient acuity tool promotes equitable nurse patient assignments. *Leading the Way*, *9*(3). https://americannursetoday.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/ant3-Workforce-Management-Acuity-304.pdf

The article titled “A new patient acuity tool promotes equitable nurse-patient assignments” by Kidd, Grove, and Taylor focuses on an equitable assignment of nurses to achieve fair workload. Most nurses expect equitable and fair assignments so that all patients may receive proper care. According to this article, job satisfaction of nurses relies partly on the workload as well as their ability to give high-quality care. When leaders are empowered with detailed and better knowledge on patient acuity as well as nursing workload, high-quality care increases while hospital expenses decrease. The views of nurses add great value to the process hence nurses need to be involved in the assessment of their workloads and decision making regarding resources. The article suggests that staff should be involved in developing an acuity tool in order to yield a more efficient and valued instrument that can improve nurse satisfaction as well as job retention.

The article brings out the case of “Indiana University Health Ball Memorial Hospital in Muncie” as a practical example, illustrating the possible outcomes of the acuity tool. The hospital realized increases in the volume of patients, device support, comorbidities, and acuity upon effective adoption of acuity tool. The article narrates the strategies that were undertaken in coming up with the new acuity tool which involved complicated procedures, and psychosocial and education interventions among others. It also highlights certain lessons learned by the team members involved in the development of the new tool. For instance, it acknowledges the fact that some people are resistant to change and may never get on board with the introduction of a new tool, but there should be a high level of preparedness to move on. The article concludes that the effective use of acuity tool is crucial in attaining nurse satisfaction hence; allocating the same number of patients to the nurses would impl unfair assignment and would result in excess workload for other nurses (Kidd, Grove, & Taylor, 2014).

1. Casey, A., & Bryer, C. (2013). Safer Nursing Care Tool. *The Shelford Group*, *1*. http://shelfordgroup.org/library/documents/130719\_Shelford\_Safer\_Nursing\_FINAL.pdf

The article titled “Safer Nursing Care Tool” by Ann Casey and Christine Bryer generally focuses on how acuity tool ensures the right staff, having the right skills and knowledge in the right place. It emphasizes the need to embrace patient need and evidence-based staffing in all care settings. It argues that evidence-based tool enables nurses to assess acuity as well as the patient dependency, integrating a staffing multiplier. The staffing multiplier enables the nursing establishment to reflect the needs of the patient in acuity/dependency terms. In order to ensure effective evidenced-decision making, the article provides a detailed outline of how acuity and dependency are measured as well as how to ensure data is collected accurately. Since quality control is vital for effective data collection, the article highlights simple steps to ensure a consistent approach is applied across all participating wards. According to this article, the effectiveness of the tool is based on the critical classification of the care patients.

Based on the article, the ability of nurses to offer better care is influenced by various factors including dependency, patient acuity, and other issues. Some of these variables include the labor market, organizational factors, staff capacity and capability, the clinical model and the leadership capacity of the nurse managers. The article proposes a tool for evidenced-based decision making known as “The Safer Nursing Care Tool” for measuring patient acuity. It also offers brief guidance for practitioners using the tool in practice. The article concludes that monitoring indicators of acuity tool help to ensure that the staffing levels are determined based on evidence to deliver better services to the patient (Casey, & Bryer, 2013).

Synthesis of the Articles

All the articles above advocate for the use of Acuity tool to ensure better service delivery, stable workforce and quality patient outcomes due to better management of valuable nursing resources. The tool can be helpful to managers in making decisions regarding where to allocate a particular nurse at a particular time based on the data or information available. For instance, patients having the greatest needs could be assigned to nurses with specialized skills or the most seasoned nurses. In the event a nursing department is chronically short-staffed, the few nurses are forced to keep up an intense pace to ensure patients get timely care. It may lead to burnt-out nurses, and the result may be medical errors and dissatisfied patients. Therefore, the tool can be of help to a nurse manager in determining the best staffing pattern that is suitable for every shift according to the patient data.

One common thing about the three articles is the fact they point out various benefits of Acuity-Based Staffing. Some of these benefits include decision-making approach that is evidence-based, benchmarking database for comparing performance, sophisticated forecasting capabilities, management reporting capabilities, and ability to access complexity of a patient and give evidence-based recommendations. The system gives health facilities the right number of staff, having the right skills and at the right time. It implies that the acuity-based staffing controls the number of nurses that needs to be on shift depending on the needs of patients and not according to the number of patients on a particular floor or hospital. Making staffing decisions without considering all the relevant factors may lead to poor patient outcomes. Existing frameworks, guidelines and principles give a foundation for staffing but face poor adoption. The articles concur with the idea that increasing development and also the adoption of technology gives the opportunity for increased data and support evidence-based decisions.

Generally, the articles acknowledge that point that various challenges and unpredicted consequences may arise in service delivery. For instance, nurses may be called to rank patients as 1, 2 or 3, depending on the individual perception of the status of a patient or the difficulty of care needed. It is a reality that the perceptions of nurses may vary depending on cultural background among other factors. The other challenge is the fact that introduction of a new tool may face some level of resistance since some people are resistant to change and may never get on board with the introduction of the new tool. Despite these challenges, there should be a high level of preparedness to move on and open a new chapter of better service delivery of patient care (Kidd, Grove, & Taylor, 2014). The use of Acuity tool gives nurses the opportunity to offer services and improve health outcomes regarding patient care through effective, informed and evidence-based staffing. It also provides an opportunity to enhance job satisfaction among nurses by addressing the notion that some nurses have more workload compared to others.

Reference

Ave, E. (2015). Acuity-Based Staffing as the Key to Hospital Competitiveness. *Frost & Sullivan*, *1*. <http://www.quadramed.com/downloads/Acuity-Based-Staffing-as-the-Key-to-Hospital-Competitiveness_white-paper.pdf>

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