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## **The Role of Nursing-Sensitive Quality Indicators in Improving Patient Care**

### **Introduction**

Management in healthcare systems worldwide constantly seeks to enhance or promote patients' satisfaction by exposing them to quality services in hospitals (Luo et al.). A key to meeting this objective is the determination of the quantifiable aspects of care that are most relevant to outcomes and those contained in nursing care. Nursing-sensitive quality indicators (NSQIs) have emerged as the measuring sticks for the quality of nursing care (Luo et al.). NSQIs relate to indicators that measure how nursing interventions influence patient status, including patient falls, pressure ulcers, and pain. These indicators are important because the data produced can be utilized to refine nursing processes further, increase safeguard measures for patients, and encourage the culture of staff and student learning. The study further analyzes the involvement and roles of NSQIs in enhancing the quality of patient care in organizations through assessment of the quality of nursing care delivery, increased patient safety, and change management in healthcare delivery.

### **Background on Nursing-Sensitive Quality Indicators (NSQIs)**

NSQIs were developed based on the understanding that nursing contributes to patients' outcomes, and efforts to quantify the impact would promote improvements in care (Zhang et al.). In the past, nursing was conceptualized as ancillary care and little was understood about its effects on patient well-being. However, in the early 1990s, the perceived clinical value of RNs was doubted by healthcare managers, and that is when the American Nurses Association (ANA)

set up the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI). This initiative was intended to establish accountability for nursing care quality by developing nurse-generated measures to define the quality of care and its relation to patient outcomes (Zhang et al.,2021). The NDNQI enabled healthcare organizations to benchmark their nursing-sensitive data, emphasizing the aspects of care most relevant to nursing outcomes. Since then, NSQIs have been developed for various indicators, such as patient safety, infection control, and pain management, which play critical roles in hospital improvement.

The NSQIs have more value because they address the components of care that are relevant to nursing. As opposed to other quality indicators that might relate to organizational or medical activities, NSQIs relate to nursing actions. For instance, pressure ulcers, called bedsores, may occur in patients if their skin does not receive proper attention once they remain in a single position for a long time. With specific reference to the nursing care of patients, strategies for preventing pressure ulcers include. They are turning the patients frequently and assessing their skin regularly. Likewise, patient falls a common source of hospital-acquired injuries, could be prevented through numerous interventions, including patient risk assessments, falls, and physical environmental changes. These examples show how NSQIs provide a more specific way by which the delivery of care can be assessed and developed within nursing.

### **The Impact of NSQIs on Patient Outcomes**

Future work may include finding out how specific care areas are vulnerable to significantly enhancing patient outcomes due to nursing actions, which is one of the essential benefits of NSQIs in improving the standard of treatment young patients receive (Roza et al., 2022). Patient falls, for instance, are a nightmare in health facilities, and it is mainly viewed as preventable. Falls are not uncommon, and they most often cause harm, notably among the

population, hospitalization, and increased costs. Fall rate services of NSQI are linked to patient falls, which assists the hospitals in identifying their fall rates and providing solutions for such falls. Several studies have found that hospitals that consistently measure fall rates and employ several interventions, including slippery socks, bed alarms, and rounds on patients, experience fewer falls. This reduction in falls safeguards patients' lives and increases the quality of treatment performance.

Likewise, the management of hospital-acquired pressure ulcers is another area where NSQIs have a lot of added benefits. Failure to prevent or treat pressure ulcers efficiently increases the incidence of severe infections, pain, and prolonged hospital admissions. By monitoring NSQIs connected with skin integrity, hospitals can adopt actions to identify and prevent pressure ulcers (Roza et al., 2022). For instance, turning the patients every two hours, using pressure-relieving mattresses as well, and assessments have significantly cut the many occurrences. These can, of course, be measured through NSQIs, enabling healthcare institutions to see in which areas these kinds of interventions are required to allow patients to receive the necessary care to prevent complications.

### **Enhancing Patient Satisfaction and Quality of Care**

Besides benefiting patients' health status, NSQIs are crucial for increasing satisfaction and the quality of services. Pain management, for example, is a nurse-sensitive indicator that focuses on a patient's experience within a hospital. Pain management is also about enhancing the patients' comfort and capability to recover from diseases and prevent complications (Nguyen et al., 2020). The tools associated with NSQIs about pain (known as Pain AIR tools reflecting assessment, intervention, and reassessment) assist the nurses in making sure that pain is always managed when a patient is admitted to the facility. By checking and treating patients' pain levels,

improving the hospital's performance, measured in terms of patient satisfaction, will be easier. Patients with better pain control are inclined to rate their experience more favorably, and in turn, patient satisfaction and interaction with the nurse will improve.

### **Challenges in Implementing NSQIs**

There are many advantages associated with NSQIs, yet utilization of NSQIs is not without specific issues for healthcare facilities. The first is the problem of collecting and analyzing NSQI data, which mainly requires significant amounts of resources and time. Nursing staff use much time documenting different aspects of a patient, such as the assessment, care plan, and other activities related to a particular patient, and such usage of time robs the actual time spent with a patient. This is most likely to occur in low-staffed hospitals or when many patients are there. Secondly, some of the data mentioned in NSQIs is qualitative and can significantly differ between patients, such as the pain level. Such fluctuations are obstacles to setting quality benchmarks and measuring the actual quality of care.

### **The Role of NSQIs in Continuous Improvement**

However, there is no doubt that NSQIs still act as a critical mechanism to sustain improvement within healthcare. Over time, technology has changed, which has led to improvements in the collection and analysis of data related to NSQI. Electronic health records and automated data tracking systems enable nurses to document and track patients' outcomes without much time. They make it possible to give nursing performance feedback instantly so that the healthcare teams can change the care planning based on the findings collected from the innovations. First, especially about the achievement of goals mentioned in NSQI, the cooperation

of healthcare team members is diverse. When the workflow is divided, it can be easier to conduct activities.

NSQIs also act as a tool for promoting increased learning and organizational improvement within healthcare organizations. As frequently as the NSQI data is collected – at least once per quarter, hospitals can analyze emerging tendencies, assess the impact of intended solutions, and consequently apply the appropriate methods that contribute to a more successful treatment process (Nguyen et al., 2020). This focus on ongoing growth prints not only the result of better patient care but also contributes to the strengthening of the professional development of nurses. Through correlating performance with NSQI results, healthcare institutions will compel nurses to continue learning in their endeavors and practice updated and informed practices.

### **Conclusion**

Nursing-sensitive quality indicators help specify the impact of nursing on patient outcomes, increase patient safety, and encourage ongoing assessment and quality improvements in healthcare organizations. The study identifies various examples of MCI concepts, including patient falls, pressure ulcers, and pain management, by tracking presumed nursing interventions in hospitals. Despite the challenges emanating from implementing NSQIs, the gains encompassing patient safety, satisfaction, and nursing practice are worth the effort. In their current state, NSQIs will continue to be the foundation of future advancements in quality improvement in nursing and, hence, the quality of the care patients receive as the health sector advances.

### Work Cited

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