

## Emergency Nursing

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### ABSTRACT

Emergency nursing is a special field or branch of nursing practice where nurses manage patients in their acute phase of illness or injury. Emergency nurses are trained to be adept at discerning life-threatening problems, prioritize the urgency of care, rapidly and effectively carry out resuscitative measures and provide other treatments. The emergency nurses often have to work under critical and stressful situations. It requires specialized knowledge and training for nurses and effective department management so that quality of care in emergency department is maintained. The objective of this article is to analyze the concept of emergency nursing and the common issues in providing emergency nursing care.

**Keywords:** Emergency, Nursing

### INTRODUCTION

Emergency nursing is a nursing specialty in which nurses care for patients in the emergency or critical phase of their illness or injury. While this is common to many nursing specialties, the key difference is that an emergency nurse is skilled at dealing with people in the phase when a diagnosis has not yet been made and the cause of the problem is not known. It is a specialty area of the nursing profession like no other; nurses must possess both general and specific knowledge about healthcare to provide quality care for people of all ages. They must be ready to treat or care for a wide variety of injuries and illnesses, ranging from a simple laceration to a heart attack. (Trimble, 2017)

In an emergency, every second is critical because recovery of the patient depends on the rapid assessment and proper treatment. Emergency nurses are trained to be adept at discerning life-threatening problems, prioritize the urgency of care, rapidly and effectively carry out resuscitative measures and provide other treatments.

The provision of immediate nursing care is to help people who have defined their problem as an emergency or where nursing intervention may prevent an emergency arising. So the emergency nurse should accept without warning any person

requiring health care with undifferentiated and undiagnosed problems originating from social, psychological, physical, spiritual or cultural factors.

The specialized body of knowledge and skills inherent in emergency nursing practice provides a unique opportunity for the emergency nurse to serve as a focal point at the intersections of primary, secondary and tertiary care on the disease-wellness continuum. This collaborative role enables the emergency nurse to affect the process and outcome of concerns such as bioethical issues, humanism, biopsychosocial and spiritual needs of clients, alternative care modalities, etc. taking the nurse's role as patient/client advocate.

The emergency nurse plays a crucial role in the identification and care of patients with any emergencies such as medical, surgical, injury, psychological (Wolf et.al. 2012).

### COMPONENTS

Component of emergency nursing are triage system, primary, secondary and ongoing assessment, prioritization, management, and evaluation, multidisciplinary coordinated and cooperative teamwork, trauma and disaster management etc. Emergency nurses must possess specialized knowledge, skills, and training for providing competent, quality service because emergency management ranges from minimal interventions to

advance life-saving interventions in an unpredictable situations.

## SCOPE OF EMERGENCY NURSING

In a variety of emergency settings, the emergency nurse should involve in the assessment, analysis, nursing diagnosis, outcome identification, planning, implementation of interventions, and evaluation of Patient's responses which is perceived as actual or potential, sudden or urgent, physical or psychosocial problems that are primarily episodic or acute (*Scope Practice Nursing*, n.d.).

According to Emergency Nurses Association (ENA), the scope of emergency nursing practice involves the assessment, analysis, nursing diagnosis, outcome identification, planning, implementation of interventions, and evaluation of human response to perceived, actual or potential, sudden or urgent, physical or psychosocial problems that are primarily episodic or acute, and which occur in a variety of settings.

The scope is bound both externally and internally with sufficient flexibility and resilience to change in response to societal needs and demands. The external boundaries are legislation/regulations/ Nursing Practice act/health act, societal demands, economic climate and health care delivery trends, and resources. The internal boundaries include those forces which fall within the practice of professional nursing such as institutional and departmental policies and procedures, Standards of Emergency Nursing Practice, Code of Ethics for Emergency Nurses, Emergency Nursing Core Curriculum (*Scope Practice Nursing*, n.d.) Most hospitals in Nepal have adopted a multi-specialist approach, where emergency room physicians are primarily general practitioners/family physicians or house officers.

According to the National Emergency Nurses Association (NENA) Canada, the scope of emergency nursing includes:

- Triage and prioritization
- Stabilization and resuscitation
- Assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, and implementation of interventions where limited

data may be available, followed by evaluation of patient response

- Provisions of care in uncontrolled and/or unpredictable situations
- Crisis interventions to meet the needs of unique patient situations
- Emergency operations preparedness
- Education of the patient and community to facilitate attainment of an optimal level of wellness
- Wellness initiatives directed to patient and community, particularly related to disease and injury prevention
- Research
- Management
- Education and mentorship
- Advanced practice
- Forensic nursing

(*Standards-of-ED-Nursing-Practice-2018*, n.d.)

## ISSUES IN EMERGENCY NURSING CARE

As mention before emergency nursing is practiced in a unique environment; where the allocation of resources, and the need for emergent care as perceived by many patients arriving in an unscheduled manner, potentially creating a stressful, chaotic environment. So numerous multifaceted issues are emerged frequently such as:

- Overcrowding can lead to compromised service quality
- Burnout syndrome among nurses resulting from staff shortage
- Lack of communication due to lack of time, resources and training
- Shortage of resources due to an overflow of patients
- High exposure to traumatic injuries/risks/ infections
- Workplace violence and patient safety
- Challenges to maintain privacy and confidentiality of patients

Some studies of the issues in emergency nursing are as follows:

Rigobello et al (2017). conducted a study to assess the patient safety climate from the perspective of healthcare professionals working in the emergency department of a hospital in Brazil. Most of the participants were female (57.6%) and had worked in the emergency department for more than 10 years (56.8%). Sixty-two participants (49.6%) were nursing professionals. The participants demonstrated satisfaction with their jobs and dissatisfaction with the actions of management with regard to safety issues. Participants' perceptions about the patient safety climate were found to be negative. The study concluded that the knowledge of professionals' perceptions of patient safety climate in the context of emergency care helps with assessments of the safety culture, contributes to the improvement of healthcare, reduces adverse events, and can focus efforts to improve the quality of care provided to patients.

Another qualitative study about challenges experienced by nurses in the emergency department in selected hospitals in Ghana (Atakro et al. 2016) mentioned that, nurses in emergency departments are affected by many challenges such as growing patient population, financial pressures, physical violence, verbal abuse, operational inefficiencies, overcrowding, and work overload. The team has identified five thematic challenges such as lack of preparation for emergency departments, verbal abuse from patient's relatives, lack of resources, stressful and time-consuming nature, and overcrowding. The study concluded that formal education of nurses in the advanced role of emergency care, adequate supply of resources, increased hospital management support, and motivations for nurses working in emergency departments are necessary to improve the practice of emergency care.

Similar study findings from Brazil on challenges for the management in terms of nurses perspective has been found that there was of care (Santos et al., 2013). overcrowding, compromised quality of care and utilization of leadership as a management tool. The suggestions mentioned to overcome these were: reorganization of the health system to focus on emergencies, changes in the flow of patient care, and

implementation of training on nursing management. The study concluded that such challenges and strategies represented a boost to the development of new practices through collaborative and coordinated work with the emergency care network.

## MANAGEMENT

Management of the issues in emergency department can be done by increasing administrative commitment, revising staffing guidelines, implementing integrated information systems, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration etc. There should be open communication, safer work environment, and uniform implementation of incentive programs. Professional accomplishments should be supported and recognized. There should be a focus on culturally sensitive empathetic care. The health system organization should consider emergency care, making necessary changes in the flow of patient care and implementation of training on nursing management

## CONCLUSION

Emergency nursing is a special field of nursing practice which is challenging requiring specialized education, skills and training. Emergency nurses need to be able to work in critical situations, doing rapid assessment, making decisions with incomplete information and giving quality service in stressful situations. However, there are a lot of issues in emergency care: overflow of patients, overcrowding and lack of resources, stressful working environment, burnout among nurses and lowered quality of service. This is a common scenario in emergency departments around the world. To ensure good patient service, there should be administrative commitment to provide emergency department with adequate resources and the nurses with relevant training and guidance.

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