The Concept of Nursing Workload: A Dimensional Analysis

Abstract Information:

Presentation Preference: SNRS  Student Poster Presentation

Abstract Categories:
Interest Group: Administration
Thematic Areas: Workforce Issues

Introduction:
Terms such as nursing work, nursing workload, patient dependency and nursing intensity are used interchangeably to define similar concepts. Clarification of the concept "nursing workload" provides one avenue for describing the contribution of nursing to health care as well as define areas for future inquiry.

Method(s):
Dimensional analysis examines literature and other sources for the processes used to create a concept. A literature search using "nursing workload" and related terms was performed using CINAHL, Medline, and PubMed databases. The sample (n = 29) of articles for analysis was selected from English texts published within the last 10 years and held by the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) library.

Results:
Initial analysis identified 18 separate dimensions of the concept, producing a database and concept map to organize the information from the literature review. The largest dimension identified was the factors influencing nursing workload. The initial analysis also revealed conditions that influence how the concept is constructed in different contexts: time, nursing characteristics and organizational characteristics. Secondary analysis involved condensing the dimensions of nursing workload to four main constructs: workload categories, influencing factors, workload measurement, and outcomes.

Discussion:
The concept analysis of nursing workload demonstrated the complexity of the concept and implications for both the practice and research. Relying purely on patient dependency, acuity or volume is not sufficient for planning quality patient care. The information may help nurses flex to meet the needs of the rapidly changing health care environment. While extensive work exists on identifying, defining, and measuring the patient factors that influence nursing workload, the nurse and work environment factors that influence workload remain relatively unexplored. Finally, this concept analysis provides evidence for the role nursing work plays in ensuring positive outcomes for patients.

Research Completed: Yes

Abstract History: NA

Financial Disclosure: Have a financial arrangement or affiliation with commercial companies whose products may be mentioned in this material?
No

FDA Disclosure: Cleared: Yes
Non-Exclusive License:

Accepted Terms: Yes

Submitted By: cravenh@musc.edu