B4.4: Making Sure: Registered Nurses Watching Over Their Hospitalized Patients

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Abstract:
Introduction: Registered Nurses are in a key position to impact patient safety and welfare due to their constant presence with patients. The importance of this role is most evident at the nurse-patient dyad level on the workshift. While various terms such as monitoring, surveillance and vigilance have been suggested as important in caring for and protecting patients, a substantive theory of the process of watching over patients does not exist. This study was undertaken to fill this significant knowledge gap.

Method(s): The classical grounded theory method of Glaser and Strauss was used to generate a substantive theory of the process of Registered Nurses watching over their patients. Fifteen hospital based Registered Nurse participants were interviewed about their experiences with watching over their patients, and the factors that facilitated and hindered this watching over process. Data collection and constant comparison analysis continued concurrently until saturation was reached in emergent categories. Through second level coding, the core category of the theory and the basic social process of Registered Nurses watching over their patients was discovered.

Results: The core category of Making Sure emerged from the data. Making Sure involves taking responsibility for the care of the patient and being certain and in control of the patient care situation. The process of watching over detailed in this theory includes five sequential categories: Knowing What is Going On, Being Close, Watching, Not Taking Anything for Granted, and Protecting. Registered Nurse participants also identified several potential patient outcomes of the watching over process which include Trust and Feeling Safe.
Discussion & Conclusions: This substantive theory provides an explanation of the process used by Registered Nurses as they watch over their patients. These results provide an important addition to the nursing quality and safety knowledge base, identifying a process by which Registered Nurses can impact patient outcomes and promote patient safety at the nurse-patient interface. Research to extend these findings should include the development of measures to operationalize this process, which could then be used in quantitative testing of this theory.

Abstract History:
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