Patient Care Needs Assessment: An Evidence-Based Process to Inform Quality Care and Decision Making

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Abstract : Beyond the number of nurses providing care for patients, having nurses with the right skills, experience and education is essential to ensure the best possible outcomes for patients. Research studies continue to link nurse staffing and skill mix with nurse-sensitive patient outcomes; numerous studies clearly show that superior patient outcomes are associated with higher levels of regulated staff. Due to the limited number of tools and processes available to assist nurse leaders with staffing models of care, nurse leaders are constantly faced with the ongoing challenge to ensure their staffing models of care best suit their patient population. In 2009, several hospitals in Ontario, Canada participated in a research study to develop and evaluate an RN/RPN utilization toolkit. The purpose of this study was to develop and evaluate a toolkit for Registered Nurses/Registered Practical Nurses Staff mix decision-making based on the College of Nurses of Ontario, Canada practice standards for the utilization of RNs and RPNs. This paper will highlight how an organization has further developed the Patient Care Needs Assessment (PCNA) questionnaire, a major component of the toolkit. Moreover, it will demonstrate how it has utilized the information from PCNA to clearly identify patient and family care needs, thus providing evidence-based results to assist leaders with matching the best staffing skill mix to their patients.

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