

Is Open Visiting hours better for the patient ?

By Heike Pomare

Introduction

Currently within New Zealand many hospitals still implement traditional visiting hour policy's. There is new evidence that suggests an open visitation policy may in fact, reduce the length of hospital stay and decrease recovery time for patients.

Question: What are the effects visiting hours have on patients and families staying in intensive care units or similar environments?

Potential benefits

Usher (2016), Family presence (2012), Chapman (2016) suggest that flexible visitation hours decreases patients

- Agitation
- Confusion
- Anxiety
- Cardiovascular complications
- Length of stay in ICU
- Vulnerability

And increases patient satisfaction.

Risks

Several reasons for visiting hour restrictions are

- Increased burnout for nurses.
- Increased physiological stress for patient
- Mental exhaustion for both patient and family
- Increased infection rate for patient
- Interference of nurses ability to care for the patient

Usher (2016) found that the last four reasons are completely unsupported by evidence.

Implications for practice

Studies have shown that open visiting hours is of considerable benefit to not only the patient, and their family but also benefits the nurses (Harth, 2010; Agard & Lomborg, 2010; Batten & Bland, 2015).

The health benefits of open visiting hours for patients align with the principles of beneficence, autonomy and non maleficence.

With good education for nurses around open visiting hours burnout was reduced, nurses preferring to stay with open visiting hours once they were implemented.

Conclusion

Research has shown patients who have unrestricted access to family receive many healing attributes from decreased anxiety and cardiovascular complications to increased participation in the care plan from both the patient and their family.

Research has shown that open visiting hours has a positive effect on the patients ability to recover quickly, increases both patient and family satisfaction.

Where open visiting hours have been implemented the majority of nurses prefer the new open visiting hours policy, in replacement of restricted visiting hours policy's.

References

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Rational for use of a poster presentation

When deciding whether to use a submission or poster I looked at the target audience I would like to reach. I wanted to reach as many people as possible, and felt a poster presentation would best achieve this.

I chose to use a poster to present my findings, as I feel that in order to bring change people must first understand change is needed, and this is achieved by education. By using a poster to give a snapshot of the contents of my literature review, people can decide whether this is a topic they feel is relevant, and would like to learn more about.

Posters have been found to be a good medium to transfer knowledge effectively, especially when combined with the presence of the author, enabling discussions between the presenter and the audience (Rowe, Dragan, 2009). By using a poster and making it visually appealing I hope to attract a wide audience, and initiate a discussion around the positive and negatives issues regarding open and restricted visiting hours.

Reference

Rowe, N., & Dragan, I. (2009). *What impact do posters have on academic knowledge transfer? A pilot survey on author attitudes ad experiences*. Retrieved from <http://bmcmmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6920-9-71>

Picot Model

PICOT Category	Information leading to question	Rational
Population	Patients who are staying in hospital.	People who are in hospital are in a foreign environment, away from family. I am interested to see if having restricted visiting hours which increasing a patients resting time, increases or decreases recovery time due to increased emotional stress from the restriction on visiting hours.
Intervention	Open visiting hours.	I will be looking for articles that pertain to the effects of visiting hours on patients, the patient's family and staff. Also looking at the effect open visiting hours has on staff.
Comparison	Restricted visiting hours compared to open visiting hours.	I want to looking at the health effects of restricted visiting hours verses open visiting hours on the patient emotional and physical wellbeing and their family. I am interested in learning the views held by staff regarding visiting hour policies.
Outcome	Improve hospital stay for patients.	I am interested to find out whether open visiting hour policies would reduce hospital stay times and increase patient satisfaction. And the positive or negative effect open visiting hour policy has on family members.
Time	Visiting hours policies	I would like to see if attitudes towards visiting hours have changed with time.