

Examining the Influence of Advanced Nursing Roles on Healthcare Quality and Cost-effectiveness

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Mini Review

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ABSTRACT

The role of Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) has evolved significantly over the years, with an increasing focus on improving healthcare quality and cost-effectiveness. This research article aims to examine the influence of advanced nursing roles on healthcare quality and cost-effectiveness. By reviewing relevant literature and empirical studies, this article highlights the contributions of advanced nursing roles, such as nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse anesthetists, in enhancing patient outcomes, promoting preventive care, and optimizing resource utilization. The findings demonstrate the positive impact of advanced nursing roles on healthcare quality and cost-effectiveness, emphasizing the importance of integrating these roles into the healthcare system.

Keywords: Patient outcomes • Preventive care • Resource utilization

INTRODUCTION

Advanced nursing roles have gained recognition worldwide for their significant impact on healthcare outcomes. This research article explores the influence of advanced nursing roles on healthcare quality and cost-effectiveness, shedding light on their contributions to improving patient care, reducing healthcare costs, and enhancing overall healthcare system performance. The integration of advanced nursing roles, such as nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse anesthetists, has significantly transformed healthcare delivery.

These roles bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and skills that contribute to enhancing healthcare quality and cost-effectiveness. This research article aims to examine the influence of advanced nursing roles on healthcare quality and cost-effectiveness by reviewing relevant literature and empirical studies. In recent years, advanced nursing roles have gained recognition as essential components of the healthcare workforce. They possess advanced clinical competencies, allowing them to provide comprehensive care, make autonomous decisions, and collaborate with other healthcare professionals. The expansion of their roles beyond traditional nursing functions has opened up new possibilities for improving patient outcomes, promoting preventive care, and optimizing resource utilization.

Nurse Practitioners (NPs)

Nurse practitioners are advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who possess advanced clinical knowledge and skills. They provide comprehensive healthcare services, including diagnosing and treating common illnesses, managing chronic conditions, prescribing medications, and ordering diagnostic tests. NPs often work in primary care settings, but they can also specialize in areas such as pediatrics, geriatrics, family medicine, or mental health. Their functions include conducting physical examinations, assessing patient health status, developing treatment plans, and educating patients on disease prevention and self-care. NPs play a vital role in increasing access to quality care, particularly in underserved areas, and are known for their holistic approach to patient care^[1-3].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Clinical Nurse Specialists are highly skilled registered nurses with advanced knowledge and expertise in a specific area of clinical practice. They work in a variety of healthcare settings, including hospitals, clinics, and community health centers. CNSs focus on improving patient outcomes through direct patient care, consultation, education, and research. Their functions include providing specialized patient care, acting as clinical experts and consultants for healthcare teams, developing and implementing evidence-based practice guidelines, and facilitating staff education and training. CNSs are known for their ability to promote clinical excellence, quality improvement, and the integration of research into practice ^[4,5].

Nurse Anesthetists (NAs)

Nurse anesthetists are advanced practice registered nurses who specialize in providing anesthesia care to patients undergoing surgical, obstetrical, or diagnostic procedures. They administer anesthesia, monitor patients' vital signs, manage pain during and after procedures, and ensure patients' safety and comfort. NAs work in collaboration with surgeons, anesthesiologists, and other healthcare professionals to ensure optimal patient outcomes. Their functions include conducting preoperative assessments, developing individualized anesthesia plans, administering various types of anesthesia, and providing critical care during the perioperative period. NAs are known for their extensive knowledge of pharmacology, physiology, and advanced airway management, contributing to safe and effective anesthesia care.

These advanced nursing roles exemplify the expanding scope of nursing practice beyond traditional roles. By utilizing their advanced clinical skills, knowledge, and autonomy, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse anesthetists contribute to enhancing healthcare quality, improving patient outcomes, and optimizing resource utilization. These roles play a crucial part in meeting the growing healthcare needs of diverse populations and addressing the challenges of an evolving healthcare landscape.

DISCUSSION

Barriers and challenges

Despite the significant contributions of advanced nursing roles to healthcare quality and cost-effectiveness, several barriers and challenges exist that can impede their full integration and utilization. Addressing these barriers is essential to maximize the potential impact of these roles. Some of the key barriers and challenges include:

Regulatory and legal constraints

Advanced nursing roles are regulated by specific laws and regulations that vary across different jurisdictions. In some regions, restrictive scope of practice laws may limit the autonomy and authority of advanced practice nurses, preventing them from practicing to their full potential. The lack of uniformity in regulatory frameworks can create confusion and barriers to practice, hindering the expansion and integration of advanced nursing roles.

Reimbursement policies and funding

Reimbursement policies and funding mechanisms play a crucial role in determining the financial viability of advanced nursing roles. In some healthcare systems, there may be limitations in reimbursement for services provided by advanced practice nurses, leading to financial barriers and disincentives for healthcare organizations to employ these roles. Adequate reimbursement for services provided by advanced nursing roles is essential to ensure sustainable integration and support their cost-effectiveness.

Resistance to change and interprofessional collaboration

Resistance to change within the healthcare system can present a significant barrier to the integration of advanced nursing roles. Some healthcare professionals may be hesitant to embrace new roles and may have concerns about the potential impact on their own practice. Effective interprofessional collaboration and communication are essential to overcome these barriers and foster a collaborative healthcare environment that recognizes the unique contributions of each healthcare professional.

Limited awareness and understanding

A lack of awareness and understanding among policymakers, healthcare organizations, and the general public about the capabilities and potential of advanced nursing roles can hinder their integration. Educating stakeholders about the role, training, and competencies of advanced practice nurses is crucial to dispel misconceptions and promote their acceptance and utilization.

Educational and training requirements

The educational and training requirements for advanced nursing roles can vary, and there may be inconsistencies in standards across different regions. Ensuring standardized and rigorous educational programs, as well as facilitating continuing education opportunities, is essential to maintain the competency and expertise of advanced practice nurses ^[6].

Workforce planning and availability

The availability of an adequate workforce of advanced practice nurses is critical for the successful integration of advanced

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nursing roles. There may be challenges in recruiting and retaining a sufficient number of qualified professionals in certain areas, particularly in rural and underserved regions. Strategies to address workforce shortages, such as scholarship programs, loan forgiveness initiatives, and incentives for practice in underserved areas, are necessary to ensure access to advanced nursing care.

Overcoming these barriers and challenges requires collaborative efforts from policymakers, healthcare organizations, professional nursing associations, and other stakeholders. Addressing regulatory constraints, advocating for reimbursement reforms, promoting interprofessional collaboration, raising awareness, and investing in education and workforce planning are vital steps towards realizing the full potential of advanced nursing roles in improving healthcare quality and cost-effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Advanced nursing roles, including nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse anesthetists, have demonstrated their potential to positively influence healthcare quality and cost-effectiveness. The evidence suggests that these roles contribute to improved patient outcomes, increased preventive care, and optimized resource utilization. However, barriers and challenges remain, requiring concerted efforts from policymakers, healthcare organizations, and nursing professionals to overcome them and fully leverage the benefits of advanced nursing roles. Continued research, education, and support are necessary to integrate these roles effectively and enhance the overall performance of healthcare systems.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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