

Module 6 Assessment: Project Proposal Template



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NR528 LEADING AND MANAGING EVIDENCE-BASED CHANGE IN NURSING

Due Date



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Summary of Area of Interest (Section I)

The significant issue of insufficient safe nurse-to-patient ratios and inadequate staffing on Med-Surg units, poses an increased threat and compromises patient safety, leading to potential medical errors, adverse patient outcomes, and increased nurse burnout. Rationing of nursing care (RONC) has been associated with poor patient outcomes and is a growing concern in healthcare. RONC refers to the intentional withholding or delay in provision of nursing care essential to maintaining the health and well-being of patients. This can lead to various adverse events, including medication errors, falls, pressure ulcers, and other complications (Uchmanowicz, I., et. al, 2024). This problem is exacerbated by the ongoing nursing shortage and can result in longer hospital stays, increased mortality, and decreased patient satisfaction.

Problem Statement (Section I)

Insufficient nursing staffing is a significant issue on med-surg units due to these units primarily handling a high-volume of patients with varying acuity levels and a multitude of needs, leading to a high demand of nursing care. Due to the increased workload on these units, it leads to potential errors, burnout, increased patient risk and safety, and voluntary turnovers. Voluntary turnovers can create additional workloads for remaining nurses, worsen nursing shortages, and negatively affect patients and associated care provider functions. The most recent National Health Care Retention and RN Staffing Report shows that the average annual nurse turnover rate increased from 18.7% in 2020 to 27.1% in 2021, and a substantial proportion of nurse turnover is voluntary (NSI Nursing Solutions, Inc., 2022).

Problem Background (Section I)

The issue of inadequate nurse staffing is a critical issue within the field of nursing and healthcare. According to a study conducted by Li, G, et. al. in 2024 highlights that, "The shortage of nurses is a significant issue in nursing human resource management, profoundly affecting nurse staffing". "Insufficient nursing staff can lead to a decline in the quality of nursing services, failing to meet patient care needs, and thereby impacting treatment outcomes and patient satisfaction". "Currently, nurses face high workloads and pressure, with long-term overwork increasing their physical and psychological burden, reducing work efficiency and quality, and leading to higher turnover rates" (2021).

Additionally, a study conducted by Lasater, KB. et. al. in 2021 found that, "each additional patient added to a nurse's workload is associated with 16% higher deaths. Also, average length of hospital stay is higher in hospitals with worse nurse staffing. Each additional patient added to a nurse's workload increases by 5% the odds of patients staying a day longer in the hospital, adding millions of dollars each year to hospital costs in the state"(2021).

Internal organization data that is currently available on staffing shortages on Med-Surg units, leading to poor patient outcomes, particularly for adult patients, may include metrics such as patient-to-staff ratios, incident reports, quality improvement programs, nursing leadership reports, patient safety dashboards, nurse turnover rates, length of stay, readmission rates, and specific incidents such as medication errors or falls. The patterns seen in this data indicate a correlation between an increased workload and frequency of incidents, which suggests a possible relationship between staffing insufficiency and patient safety concerns. Also, increased workloads can result in burn-out, missed care, and errors, ultimately affecting overall patient safety and care. The data that is being tracked and reviewed can help identify trends and areas needed for improvement in