

Nursing Research: Reading, Using and Creating Evidence: Reading, Using and Creating Evidence

21st Century nursing is the glue that holds a patient's health care journey together. Across the entire patient experience, and wherever there is someone in need of care, nurses work tirelessly to identify and protect the needs of the individual.

Beyond the time-honored reputation for compassion and dedication lies a highly specialized profession, which is constantly evolving to address the needs of society. From ensuring the most accurate diagnoses to the ongoing education of the public about critical health issues; nurses are indispensable in safeguarding public health.

Nursing can be described as both an art and a science; a heart and a mind. At its heart, lies a fundamental respect for human dignity and an intuition for a patient's needs. This is supported by the mind, in the form of rigorous core learning. Due to the vast range of specialisms and complex skills in the nursing profession, each nurse will have specific strengths, passions, and expertise.

However, nursing has a unifying ethos: In assessing a patient, nurses do not just consider test results. Through the critical thinking exemplified in the nursing process (see below), nurses use their judgment to integrate objective data with subjective experience of a patient's biological, physical and behavioral needs. This ensures that every patient, from city hospital to community health center; state prison to summer camp, receives the best possible care regardless of who they are, or where they may be.

What exactly do nurses do?

In a field as varied as nursing, there is no typical answer. Responsibilities can range from making acute treatment decisions to providing inoculations in schools. The key unifying characteristic in every role is the skill and drive that it takes to be a nurse. Through long-term monitoring of patients' behavior and knowledge-based expertise, nurses are best placed to take an all-encompassing view of a patient's wellbeing.

What types of nurses are there?

All nurses complete a rigorous program of extensive education and study, and work directly with patients, families, and communities using the core values of the nursing process. In the United States today, nursing roles can be divided into three categories by the specific responsibilities they undertake.

Registered Nurses

Registered nurses (RN) form the backbone of health care provision in the United States. RNs provide critical health care to the public wherever it is needed.

Key Responsibilities

Perform physical exams and health histories before making critical decisions

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Provide health promotion, counseling and education

Administer medications and other personalized interventions

Coordinate care, in collaboration with a wide array of health care professionals

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) hold at least a Master's degree, in addition to the initial nursing education and licensing required for all RNs. The responsibilities of an APRN include, but are not limited to, providing invaluable primary and preventative health care to the public. APRNs treat and diagnose illnesses, advise the public on health issues, manage chronic disease and engage in continuous education to remain at the very forefront of any technological, methodological, or other developments in the field.

APRNs Practice Specialist Roles

Nurse Practitioners prescribe medication, diagnose and treat minor illnesses and injuries

Certified Nurse-Midwives provide gynecological and low-risk obstetrical care

Clinical Nurse Specialists handle a wide range of physical and mental health problems

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists administer more than 65 percent of all anesthetics

Licensed Practical Nurses

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), also known as Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs), support the core health care team and work under the supervision of an RN, APRN or MD. By providing basic and routine care, they ensure the wellbeing of patients throughout the whole of the health care journey

Key Responsibilities

Check vital signs and look for signs that health is deteriorating or improving

Perform basic nursing functions such as changing bandages and wound dressings

Ensure patients are comfortable, well-fed and hydrated

May administer medications in some settings

What is the nursing process?

No matter what their field or specialty, all nurses utilize the same nursing process; a scientific method designed to deliver the very best in patient care, through five simple steps.

Assessment â€” Nurses assess patients on an in-depth physiological, economic, social and lifestyle basis.

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By accurately implementing the care plan, nurses guarantee consistency of care for the patient whilst meticulously documenting their progress. Evaluation â€” By closely analyzing the effectiveness of the care plan and studying patient response, the nurse hones the plan to achieve the very best patient outcomes.

Nurses are Key to the Health of the Nation

Reference

[Student Handbook for Pharmacy Practice Research](#)

[The Practice of Research in Social Work](#)