

METHODS REQUIRED FOR CRITICAL CARE NURSING IN MALAWI

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Introduction

Critical care paramedic deals specifically with the patients who are at high risk for life threatening problems. Critical care physicians make sure that the patient gets direct treatment, intensity, interventions and therapies and daily assessments.

Materials and Methods

- **Research design:** Interpretive descriptive (ID) design was used in this qualitative study. It is a methodological approach which responds to the need for knowledge that is required in applied disciplines.
- **Participants:** There were 102 nurses working in the CCUs at the two hospitals. In keeping in mind with the explanatory sequential mixed methods design of the larger study, invitation to participate in the qualitative study was limited to nurses (n = 79) who participated in an initial survey.
- **Data collection:** The interviewers and FGDs were conducted in English within the hospital at the most convenient time and place for the participants.
- **Data analysis:** The transcribed data were entered into NVivo version 11 to aid data management. After organizing the data into various groups, the next step involved making sense of relationships between the various groups by sequencing the focus of attention from individual cases to the whole data set.
- **Rigour:** Measures which enhance credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were used to ensure trustworthiness of the study

William Avery

1. Department of critical care unit, Hongkong.

Corresponding author:

William Avery

✉ Williamavery@yahoo.com

MD., PhD, International care unit, hongkong.

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- **Theoretical knowing:** The theme, theoretical knowing is the knowledge that nurses should possess and integrate into the treatment and care of critically ill patients and guardians.
- **Practical knowing:** Practical knowing refers to the ability to perform skills that are required in the treatment and care of patients in the units. The severity of patients' illness and the treatment approach in these units required the practical knowing of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), suctioning, patient assessment and how to use and care for the equipment.
- **Findings:** The dimensions of knowing required to be an effective CCU nurse in Malawi comprise theoretical knowing, practical knowing, managerial knowing and, ethical and professional knowing. In addition, knowing calls for interpretation and acting.
- **Ethical and professional knowing:** The theme ethical and professional knowing was reflected in participants reports that nurses in CCU are expected to demonstrate ethical decision making, appropriate behaviour, attitude and values as prescribed in the code of ethics for the nurses.

Results

This referred to the perception of nurse leaders, anesthetists and nurses that the nurses did not have the required knowledge or skills to safely and competently care for critically ill patients. Factors that contributed to this sense of unpreparedness included a lack of educational preparation as well as organizational factors.

Discussion

This study set out with the aim of exploring learning needs of nurses in CCUs to inform the development of an education programme. The findings showed that nurses in CCUs require theoretical, practical, managerial, ethical and professional knowing, and the ability to interpret and act. As earlier mentioned, there are different patterns of knowing that are reported in literature.

Conclusion

This study is limited by the small sample and the fact that the study was conducted at two public tertiary hospitals. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study has implications for critical care nursing education and practice in Malawi.

Limitations of the study

Generalizability of these findings is subject to certain limitations. The sample size was small, and the study was conducted at two public tertiary hospitals. Despite these limitations, the findings have significant implications for critical care education, practice, research and health policy in Malawi and other developing countries.