

The Influence of Nursing Handover on Nurses' Mental Health: a Scoping Review

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Introduction

Nursing handovers are indispensable in clinical practice, permeating various contexts of healthcare. It is vital to ensure the continuity of care by involving the transfer of accurate information about the patient, implying responsibility for their health. However, believing that this crucial moment in nursing practice is free from implications for nurses' mental health is naive.

Objective

To explore and map the implications of nursing handover regarding nurses' mental health.

Methods

JBIM¹ Methodology and PRISMA ScR² Checklist. Databases searched: CINAHL Ultimate, MEDLINE Ultimate, MedicLatina, and Scopus. Grey literature included: Google Scholar and RCAAP.

Results

We identified 11 studies published between 1988 and 2022 from the UK, Australia, the USA, South Korea, and Hong Kong, involving over 122 nurses in acute care settings. The findings reveal three major themes: source of psychological discomfort, coping resource, and peer support and cohesion. Negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and tension are linked to handovers, particularly bedside handovers, which raise confidentiality issues and induce scrutiny among nurses. The lack of standardized training and consistent procedures also contributes to stress, especially for newly graduated and less experienced nurses.³ Conversely, handovers function as structured rituals providing peer support and a sense of control, helping nurses manage psychological demands.

Conclusion

This review highlights the critical role of nursing handovers in supporting nurses' mental health and underscores the need for standardized practices to improve the well-being of nursing professionals and the quality of patient care. Future research should measure the impact of different handover practices on nurses' mental health and explore their supportive, social, protective, and restorative functions.

Keywords

Nursing; Mental Health; Patient Handoff; Review.

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