

Role Of Leadership In Patient Safety And Delivery Of Optimal Care Of Non-ICU Patients

Dr. Jyoti Sharma (GM Nursing), Ms. Suneetha.Veerabathini (NQO)

Nursing Department, Yashoda Hospital, Secunderabad

Abstract:

Background: Prevention of cardiac arrest in a acute care hospital can achieved by enhanced patient surveillance and identification of patient deterioration through early warning signs. Nurses play a vital role in identifying early warning signs of patient deterioration and initiating the appropriate interventions to prevent further deterioration. The vigilance and quick action can make a significant difference in the outcome of a patient's care.

Aims/Objectives: The objective of our study was to develop a highly effective nursing team capable of responding to MET Calls, aiming to achieve "Zero Code Blue" events within our hospital.

Materials and Methods: To assess the effectiveness of a nurse-led program focused on enhancing knowledge and practices related to leadership in identifying patient deterioration through early warning signs and providing optimal care for non-ICU patients, we employed a prospective research design. This study was conducted at Yashoda Hospitals in Secunderabad, Telangana, involving 640 nursing staff from March 2023 to February 2024. Data was collected using a structured knowledge questionnaire divided into four sections: Part I covered Basic Life Support (BLS), Part II addressed the Modified Early Warning Score (MEWS), Part III focused on Clinical Knowledge, and Part IV examined liaison with primary care providers and family members.

Results: The study results comparing the mean pretest and post-test knowledge scores of nursing staff regarding their role in identifying patient deterioration through early warning signs and providing optimal non-ICU care. The post-test mean score of 19.13 was significantly higher than the pretest mean score of 11.69, with a paired t-value of 11.01, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.00001$). Additionally, approximately 68% of the nursing staff met the criteria to qualify as mentors based on their assessment.

Conclusion: The findings demonstrated that the nurse-led program effectively empowered nurses to take on leadership roles during patient deterioration, leading to significant improvements in early detection and timely intervention. Consequently, nurses are now able to respond quickly and confidently to changes in patient conditions, thereby preventing serious complications and saving lives.

Key Words: MET Calls, MEWS, BLS, Role of Leadership

Date of Submission: 13-01-2025

Date of Acceptance: 23-01-2025

I. Introduction

Leadership within healthcare environments is crucial for maintaining patient safety and providing the highest quality of care. The impact of effective leadership extends beyond merely managing teams; it fundamentally shapes the organizational culture, influences the development and implementation of policies, and directs the daily practices that collectively affect patient outcomes. This influence is evident across all levels of care, including settings outside of the intensive care unit (ICU). This introduction delves into the essential role that leadership plays in improving patient safety and care quality, with particular emphasis on non-ICU environments. It examines how strong leadership contributes to the creation of a supportive and effective care framework, ultimately enhancing the overall patient experience and outcomes in these critical yet often overlooked settings.

Leadership and Patient Safety: Patient safety is a fundamental concern in healthcare, and leadership has a direct impact on safety outcomes. Research underscores that effective leadership is essential for creating a culture of safety where staff are encouraged to report errors and near-misses without fear of retribution (Sullivan et al., 2020).¹ Leaders who foster an environment of open communication and continuous learning contribute significantly to reducing adverse events and improving overall patient safety (Leonard et al., 2019).²

A study by Frankel et al. (2006) highlighted that leadership commitment to safety, such as setting clear safety goals and providing necessary resources, directly influences safety practices and outcomes.³ Leaders who engage in safety-focused activities, such as regular safety briefings and encouraging staff involvement in safety initiatives, can enhance adherence to best practices and protocols, thereby mitigating risks and improving patient care (Pronovost et al., 2006).⁴

Leadership and Optimal Care Delivery: In non-ICU settings, where patients may not require intensive monitoring but still need high-quality care, leadership plays a crucial role in ensuring that care standards are met and continuously improved. Effective leaders in these settings are responsible for coordinating multidisciplinary teams, implementing evidence-based practices, and optimizing resource allocation (Baker et al., 2010).⁵

Leaders who demonstrate strong clinical and managerial skills are better positioned to guide their teams in providing consistent and high-quality care. A study by Aiken et al. (2008) found that nursing leadership quality is associated with improved patient outcomes, including reduced mortality and higher patient satisfaction.⁶ Similarly, effective leadership in non-ICU settings helps in managing patient flow, reducing delays in care, and ensuring that care is personalized and responsive to patient needs (Manser et al., 2013).⁷

Challenges and Strategies: Despite the clear benefits of strong leadership, there are challenges in implementing effective leadership strategies. Barriers such as inadequate training, lack of support from higher management, and limited resources can hinder leadership efforts (Cummings et al., 2010).⁸ To overcome these challenges, it is essential for healthcare organizations to invest in leadership development programs and create supportive environments where leaders can thrive.

Research by Edmondson (2019) suggests that leaders who actively promote teamwork and collaboration can address many of these challenges.⁹ By fostering an inclusive culture and providing opportunities for professional growth, leaders can enhance their teams' ability to deliver high-quality care and maintain patient safety (West et al., 2014).¹⁰

Leadership is a fundamental component in advancing patient safety and delivering the highest standard of care, especially in non-ICU settings where the complexity of patient care demands careful coordination and adherence to rigorous standards. Effective leadership plays a critical role in ensuring that safety protocols are rigorously followed, resources are managed efficiently, and the quality of patient care is consistently enhanced. In an evolving healthcare landscape, the importance of investing in robust leadership cannot be overstated. Strong leadership is essential not only for achieving exceptional patient outcomes but also for fostering a culture that prioritizes safety and continuous improvement. By guiding and supporting healthcare teams, leaders help to navigate the complexities of patient care, drive best practices, and ensure that every aspect of care contributes to positive patient experiences and outcomes.

Preventing cardiac arrest in an acute care hospital setting can be effectively achieved through improved patient monitoring and the early identification of signs of patient deterioration. This proactive approach involves recognizing early warning signs and taking timely, appropriate actions to prevent the patient's condition from worsening. Nurses play a crucial role in this process by being vigilant and responsive to subtle changes in patient status, which allows them to initiate necessary interventions before more serious issues arise. Their attentive monitoring and prompt actions can significantly impact the overall outcome of patient care, potentially preventing adverse events such as cardiac arrest.

At Yashoda Hospitals in Secunderabad, we have restructured our Rapid Response Team to enhance our emergency response capabilities. This reorganization has taken the form of a Medical Emergency Team (MET) Call program, which operates under the guidance and leadership of the Senior Nursing Manager (SNM) and Nurse Manager (NM). By implementing this program, we aim to ensure that our response to medical emergencies is both swift and effective, thereby improving patient safety and outcomes within our facility.

II. Aim

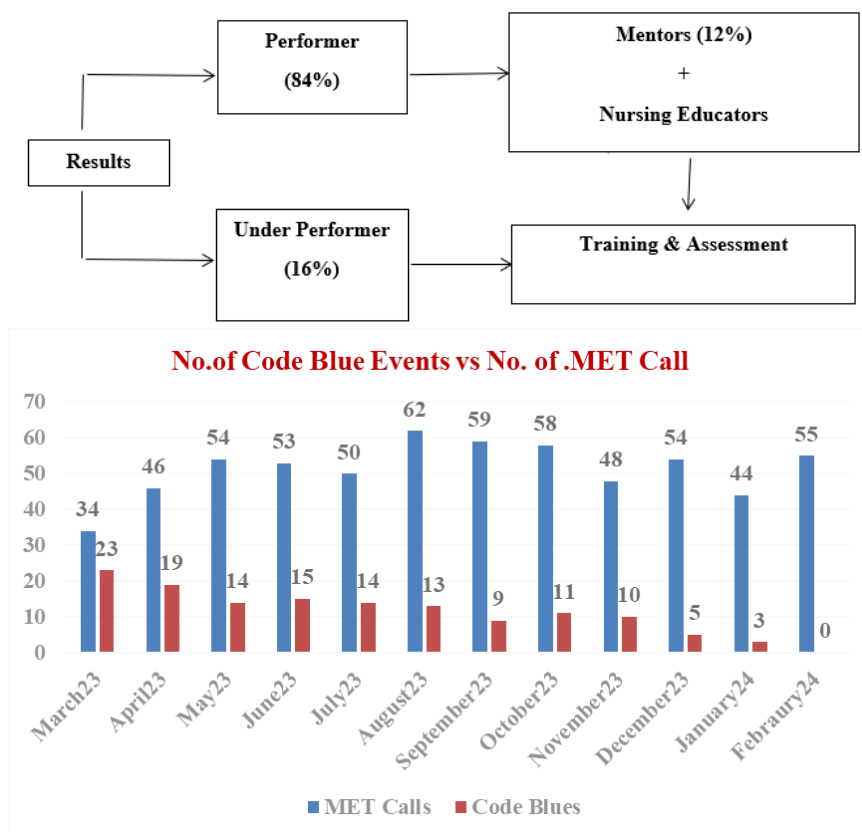
To build a strong team of nursing to respond to the MET Calls to achieve "Zero Code Blue" events.

III. Materials And Methods

To achieve the goals of evaluating the effectiveness of a nurse-led program on improving knowledge and practices related to leadership in identifying patient deterioration through early warning signs and providing optimal care for non-ICU patients, a prospective research design was implemented. The study took place at Yashoda Hospitals in Secunderabad, Telangana, involving 640 nursing staff from March 2023 to February 2024. Data was gathered using a structured questionnaire divided into four sections: Part I covered Basic Life Support (BLS), Part II focused on the Modified Early Warning Score (MEWS), Part III addressed clinical knowledge, and Part IV examined liaison with primary care providers and family members.

IV. Results & Findings

A comparison of the average pretest and posttest knowledge scores among nursing staff on the role of leadership in recognizing patient deterioration through early warning signs and providing optimal care for non-ICU patients revealed that the mean posttest score of 19.13 was higher than the pretest mean score of 11.69. The paired t-value was 11.01, indicating a significant difference with a p-value less than 0.00001. Additionally, approximately 68% of the nursing staff met the assessment criteria to qualify as mentors.



V. Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that the nurse-led program significantly empowered nurses to assume leadership roles when addressing patient deterioration. This empowerment was associated with a marked enhancement in the early detection of patient deterioration, which in turn facilitated timely interventions and ultimately led to improved patient outcomes. Nurses have now developed the ability to respond quickly and with confidence to any changes in a patient's condition, which has proven effective in preventing serious complications and, consequently, saving lives.

Acknowledgements:

The authors would like to thank the Management of Yashoda Hospitals for the continuous support, Special thanks to Dr. Amidyala Lingaiah (Director of Medical Services Yashoda Hospitals), Dr. Amar Biradar (AVP- Medical Services, Yashoda Hospital, Secunderabad) and Nursing Team.

References

- [1] Sullivan, L., Hawkes, C., & Thompson, S. (2020). Leadership And Patient Safety: Exploring The Critical Link. **Healthcare Management Review**, 45(2), 133-142.
- [2] Leonard, M. W., Frankel, A., & Simmonds, T. (2019). Building A Culture Of Safety: Evidence-Based Practices And Leadership Strategies. **BMJ Quality & Safety**, 28(7), 590-596.
- [3] Frankel, A., Grillo, S., & Smith, S. (2006). The Role Of Leadership In Improving Patient Safety: A Multi-Level Approach. **Journal Of Patient Safety**, 2(3), 119-126.
- [4] Pronovost, P., Weast, B., & Schwarz, M. (2006). Implementing And Sustaining A Patient Safety Program. **Journal Of The American Medical Association**, 296(2), 219-226.
- [5] Baker, D. P., Day, R., & Salas, E. (2010). Teamwork As An Essential Component Of High-Reliability Organizations. **Health Services Research**, 45(5p2), 1325-1343.
- [6] Aiken, L. H., Clarke, S. P., Sloane, D. M., Lake, E. T., & Cheney, T. (2008). Effects Of Hospital Care Environment On Patient Mortality And Nurse Outcomes. **Journal Of Nursing Administration**, 38(5), 196-200.
- [7] Manser, T., & Foster, S. (2013). Teamwork And Communication In Non-ICU Settings: The Impact On Patient Safety And Care. **Journal Of Health Management**, 15(4), 387-399.
- [8] Cummings, G. G., Hayduk, L., & Estabrooks, C. A. (2010). The Relationship Between Leadership Practices And Nursing Outcomes: A Systematic Review. **Journal Of Nursing Administration**, 40(7/8), 368-374.
- [9] Edmondson, A. C. (2019). The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety In The Workplace For Learning, Innovation, And Growth. **John Wiley & Sons**.
- [10] West, M. A., Borrill, C. S., & Unsworth, K. L. (2014). Team Effectiveness And The Role Of Leadership. **Journal Of Organizational Behavior**, 35(6), 783-796.