

Developing a Job Description for Staff Nurse Working in Haemodialysis Units in Selected hospitals

SUMMARY

Job description is an important issue that should be well known by all workers, each according to his/her job. This will enable the worker to perform better and achieve department and institution's objectives. Job description helps to prevent misunderstanding among nurses, overlapping of duties, conflicts, frustrations, and to improve employee's performance. Job description involves organizational relationships, overall responsibilities, specific duties and working conditions for staff nurses in the haemodialysis units. It is useful for recruitment, placement and transfer decisions. It also can be used to guide and evaluate personnel. Moreover, job description is necessary in order to keep up-to-date with current health care changes and development, to avoid ambiguity, and to achieve the ultimate goal of continuous improving quality of care.

The aim of the present study was to delineate activities that should be performed by the hemodialysis nurse as perceived by staff nurses, to observe their actual performance, and through comparing the actual performance with the ideal one, based on literature review and experts' opinions, to develop a job description for staff nurses working in the hemodialysis units.

The study was conducted in the hemodialysis units at Al-Agouza hospital, Ain Shams University hospitals, and Ain Shams Specialized hospital. Subjects of the study consisted of 63 nurses and 48 juries.

Two types of data collection tools were used. The first, an Arabic questionnaire sheet, was indented for nurses of the haemodialysis units. This tool was aiming at eliciting nurses' opinion regarding activities to be performed by the nurse working in hemodialysis unit. The second, an observation checklist for staff nurses, was aiming at assessing activities actually performed by nurses working in hemodialysis units. The researcher observed each nurse while on duty.

Validation of the developed job description format was ascertained by experts' opinions. These included external experts from faculty members from the nursing administration and medical-surgical departments of Ain-Shams University Faculty of Nursing, and from the same departments of Tanta University Faculty of Nursing. It also included internal experts from the selected study hospitals, as well as from Cairo Curative Organization hospitals.

The results have shown that the majority of the jobholders (47.6%) chose the title of "artificial kidney nurse". For job summary, the opinion of the highest percentage of the jobholders (76.2%) was the "provision of nursing care for patients on regular hemodialysis, psychologically, physically, and technically, and giving health education to families". For accountability, (88.9%) of participants chose the head nurse of the hemodialysis unit as the direct supervisor of the jobholder. The proposed subordinate of jobholder was mainly (50.8%) the nurse aide.

As for the jobholder's professional qualifications, the highest percentage (46.0%) of the staff nurses chose a nursing diploma. For personal qualification, more than 80.0% have agreed on all the listed items. Concerning the proposed experience, 60.3% had the opinion of only six months experience, while 36.5% preferred one year experience in hemodialysis unit.

Regarding hemodialysis nurse duties in pre-dialysis phase, most duties had a high percentage of agreement, ranging from 79.4% to 100%. This was both in relation to machine preparation and patient preparation. The only exception was related to checking signed consent to perform hemodialysis treatment, which was agreed upon by 61.9% of the participants. Regarding duties during dialysis, there were also high percentages of agreement upon most duties except for four out of thirty-five items, where the agreement percentage less than 60.0%. These were related to drawing blood sample to determine the adequacy of dialysis, monitoring body temperature every two hours (52.4%), and monitoring blood pressure and pulse every half hour for stable patients (57.4%). In post-dialysis phase, all duties had high percents of agreement. This was also true for other tasks, administering health teaching for patients and family, and training and administrative duties.

Observation of the actual jobholders' performance revealed that only five of the twenty-four observed duties in pre-dialysis phase were not done by the nurses. These were the duties of wearing protective devices before dealing with the patient, orienting the patient to dialysis unit and dialysis personnel, and checking signed consent to perform hemodialysis treatment. During dialysis phase, the majority of nurses have performed most the observed duties. Meanwhile, seven of the thirty-five observed duties were not performed by most of the nurses. These were the duties of aspirating blood by syringe from both needles, flushing blood back into the patient blood vessels with heparinized saline, inserting hemodialysis catheter in a vascular access under aseptic technique, monitoring blood pressure and pulse every half-hour for stable patients, monitoring body temperature every two hours, drawing blood sample to determine adequacy, and calculating and recording intake and output during treatment session.

As for the post-dialysis phase duties, and training-administrative duties, the majority of the nurses have performed almost all the observed duties.

Meanwhile, the duty related to assessing the patient for signs of hemorrhage and hypotension for the first hour after dialysis was done by only 46.0% of the nurses, whereas none of the nurses was observed to measure central venous pressure or to keep functioning of suction apparatus (0.0%). As for administering health teaching, the majority of the nurses have not performed almost all the observed duties. The only task that was performed by most of the nurses was that of orienting patient with his/her dry weight and current weight (92.1%).

Concerning the validity of the format of the developed job description, it has been indicated by the total agreement of experts about all items.

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the job contents of the nurses working in hemodialysis units have been delineated and validated. It is recommended that the developed job description be used for recruitment, placement, and transfer decisions, and it must be available, and acknowledged by the health care providers to avoid job overlapping and role ambiguity. Performance evaluation should be based on available job description.

