

SPECIAL PAPER

Synthesizing Knowledge about Nursing Shift Handovers: Overview and Reflections from Evidence-Based Literature

Efstratios Athanasakis, BSc, RN

Graduate Nursing Faculty, Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, Greece

Correspondence: Athanasakis Efstratios, Antifilipi, 64001, Kavala, Greece.

e-mail: stratosathanasakis@yahoo.gr

Abstract

Background: Nursing shift handovers consider to be a pattern of communication that is applied in everyday clinical nursing practice, in order to be fulfilled the goals of organization, continuity, consistency and safety of care that nurses provide to patients.

Aim: The aim of this review was the evaluation of the body of current research evidence examined issues concerning shift handovers in nursing.

Methodology: A combination of various search terms: nurses, nursing, shift handovers and bedside handovers were used to search the Pubmed database. Also, a manual search contributed to the detection of more articles. For the introduction of an article in the existing review, specific inclusion criteria were set.

Results: A total of 19 original research articles were included. A table of shift handover models and another one of the basic characteristics of the research articles are presented. Analysis of the research findings provided three major themes related to the aim of the review, as follows: 'handovers' components', 'change type of handover' and 'handovers' standardization'. A large part of the research literature looked at the exploration of the elements that handovers are composed of.

Conclusions: This review highlighted evidence-based literature of fundamental information for nursing shift handovers. Effective communication practices among nurses entail effective handovers, effective patient care quality and patient safety maintenance. Nursing shift handovers are a multifaceted activity, which needs deeply understanding. Further knowledge development of handovers is required.

Keywords: nurses, nursing, shift handovers, bedside handovers.