

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE NURSING RESEARCH COMMITTEE

“More Than Just A Journal Club”

A Dialogue for the Nursing Community

The following guide can be used to aid the participants of the Journal Club in summarizing the article being discussed. The guide is meant to provide a basis for generating an interactive dialogue exploring the link between nursing research and clinical practice.

Title: Vision for a Treasured Resource: Part 1, Nurse Manager Role Implementation

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Study Synopsis: *The importance of the nurse manager for both quality patient care and organizational effectiveness seems indisputable. With decentralized decision-making, the role of the nurse manager has expanded in both scope and accountability. In this two-part article, role implementation of the nurse manager and associated learning needs are described. This article focuses on interpreting significant incidents related to role implementation in nurse manager's practice. It also shows how the authors used the Manager as Developer Model for organizing and understanding some of the data.*

Background and Significance:

Nurse managers play a pivotal role in quality patient care, organizational effectiveness, staff nurses' autonomy and job satisfaction, and unit culture. Fifty-eight percent of 288 chief nurse executives ranked the nurse manager role as the most important in the hospital. With a continually changing health care environment, the role of the nurse manager becomes more complex and sophisticated everyday. Not only is the nurse manager a clinical expert, but also the linchpin in creating high-quality, low-cost patient care. The nurse manager is responsible for creating patient care units perceived by patients and staff as an environment where healing takes place

Purpose of the Study: *The purpose of the study was to describe the practical knowledge or experienced know-how that is fundamental to understanding and fostering the development of expertise in nurse manager practice.*

Review of the Current Literature: *Empirical data on the role and function of nurse managers are limited by problems in study design and inconsistencies in the reporting of methods and results. We approached the role of the nurse manager and associated learning needs by interpreting significant incidents in nurse managers' everyday practice. A few well-planned studies of the role and functions of the nurse manager have been undertaken. The American Organization of Nurse Executives' national survey of nurse managers explored the balance between clinical and managerial activities as well as anticipated changes in the nature of managerial activities. This national study led to the American Organization of Nurse Executives/American Hospital Association Management Advisory on the Role and Functions of the Hospital Nurse Manager. Few would argue with its assertion that the nurse manager serves as the “. . . vital link between the larger vision of the health care institution and unit-based delivery of effective, high-quality patient care.” The Advisory outlines six broad areas of role responsibilities:*

- * Management of clinical nursing practice and patient care delivery;
- * Management of human, fiscal, and other resources;
- * Development of personnel;
- * Compliance with regulatory and professional standards;
- * Strategic planning; and
- * Fostering interdisciplinary and collaborative relationships.

Mark emphasizes that the American Organization of Nurse Executives' study also explored nurse manager role components and what chief nurse executives, chief executive officers, and nurse managers thought these components would be in the year 2000. In general, nurse managers will have responsibility for more than a single unit, be a participant in strategic planning, have authority for goal setting and planning for effective and efficient use of human, financial, and material resources on these units. Further, Mark explains that nurse managers must combine management skills and knowledge about clinical nursing practice. She states that it is the function of the nurse manager to apply organizational policies and practices to patient-care situations in the daily operations of an area or program in the health care organization. The American Nurses Association Task Force on Standards identified similar activities for Organized Nursing Services. Several studies have focused on the skills and competency needed by nurse managers to be successful in the role. Skill lists were compiled from expert nurse executive opinions, reviews of the literature, or a combination of both. In addition, the skills are rank-ordered for their perceived importance, providing some guidance for curriculum development, performance appraisal, and continuing education. Such taxonomies are helpful for understanding the scope of practice of the nurse manager and the associated educational needs, but they do not capture the blending and application of these skills in actual, everyday situations.

Sample/Population: The sample contained 29 nurse managers at Boston's Beth Israel Hospital.

Methods and Design/Data Collection: Each Nurse Manager briefly wrote and discussed narratives of significant incidents in their management practice. An interpretive phenomenologic approach was used for data analysis.

Results/ Findings: Some nurse managers eventually realize that they cannot be the sole problem-solver on the unit and that doing so limits the development of their staff. The challenge for management development educators is to assist managers in reaching these insights more quickly and less painfully. Through our work with the Manager As Developer Model, these outcomes seem possible earlier even with less experienced nurse managers.

Differences in role implementation were reflected in the ways nurse managers approached issues such as staffing, coaching, managing change, and negotiating relationships. The approaches used by nurse managers were not solely a function of experience in the role. Unlike clinical nurses' expertise, we could not characterize nurse manager practice on the basis of experience alone. It seems that other factors, perhaps personal or life experiences, shape nurse manager role performance.

For further information please visit our website:

<http://www.MGHNursingResearchCommittee.org>