

## Nurse Satisfaction: Assigning Patients by Acuity

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# Nurse Satisfaction: Assigning Patients By Acuity

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## BACKGROUND

- Nurse complaints of increased stress due to patient assignment
- Dissatisfaction with unequal distribution of workload between nurses
- Nurses report concern when assignments are not equal; care cannot be distributed evenly, resulting in poor quality patient care
- Nurses fear patient safety is more at risk depending on assignment received/nurse to patient ratio

## PICO

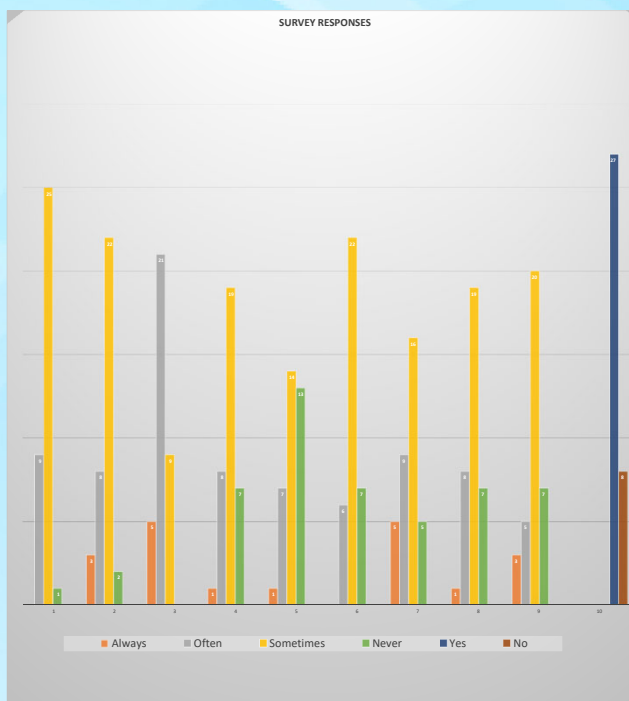
- **P**- Inpatient med-surg nurses
- **I**- Assigning patients by acuity
- **C**- Assigning patients by room number
- **O**- Nurse satisfaction

## EVIDENCE

- Developing an acuity tool can aide in increasing nurse and patient satisfaction (Al-Dweik, Ahmad-2020 A). By developing an evidence-based acuity tool it can allow for fair assignments among nursing staff, which in return increases quality of care to patients and in managing their care. In addition, it leaves nurses more satisfied to deliver the best quality of care to their patients, improving their workflow, increasing job satisfaction and improved staff efficiency (Al-Dweik, Ahmad-2020 A).
- When patient assignments are not equal nurses may feel disappointed and frustrated, and they cannot perform their work toward patient's well (Al-Dweik, Ahmad-2020 A). Research shows many patients' outcomes affected by implementing the patient's acuity tool: number of patient falls, mortality rate, amount of undone work, length of stay, and patient satisfaction, which was partially explained by increased workload (Al-Dweik, Ahmad-2020 A).
- Utilizing an effective tool in assessing patient acuity can provide safe care, adjust staff ratios, and balance workload amongst units. An acuity measurement tool has also been known to assist in improving patient safety and help prevent patient adverse events (Sobaski, 2018 A).
- Implementing a reliable patient acuity tool when having to determine shift assignments can affect nursing workload and increase nurse job satisfaction. By implementing a tool, it can allow for adequate staffing, provide better care to patients, and help control the workload that is assigned to nurses (Al-Dweik, Ahmad-2020 B).
- Having an acuity tool can decrease resuscitation events, improve patient outcomes and increase staff satisfaction. An acuity tool can also, allow for an equal distribution of workload for patient care and in making patient assignments (Sobaski, et.al, 2019 B).

## OUTCOMES

35 med-surg nurses responded to the survey. Overall, it seems our nurses feel that assignments based on patient acuity would increase satisfaction as well as indirectly improving patient safety. Based on question 10 of the survey, the majority of nurses responded that assignments based on acuity would increase job satisfaction. Therefore, integrating an acuity tool may appropriately assist in creating equal patient assignments based on acuity.



## IMPLEMENTATION

- In April- conducted research on evidence based use of acuity tool and score for patient assignments/nurse satisfaction.
- Created a survey to evaluate nurse satisfaction with patient assignments- 10 questions
- Acuity tool- score used to compare each patient level of acuity and compare total number to fellow nursing assignments.
  - Unable to obtain permission to use an acuity tool to score patients
- In May- evaluated responses of nurse satisfaction surveys

## NEXT STEPS

- Utilization of Epic feature "Nursing Workload Acuity Score" to evaluate patient acuity levels
- Incorporate a nurse to patient ratio for safety based on acuity when the UL completes the assignment
- Incorporate the acuity scale for all med-surg units

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