Examining the Relationship of Accurate ESI© Triage Scores to Emergency Department Nursing Attitudes and Experience

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Background:
The nationwide nursing shortage, coupled with the increasing volumes of Emergency Department (ED) patient visits, is an emerging threat to patient safety and quality care. ED nurses who can exhibit professional values and essential competencies in providing patient centered care will ultimately contribute to an optimal patient outcome.

Based on descriptive literature, factors identified to accurately triage include: experience and “gut feeling” (Cone & Murray, 2002); education, experience, and empathy (McNair & Gurney, 2005); and, caring, genuine concern and advocacy for the patient (Wiman & Wikblad, 2004).

The AACN synergy model (2007) encompassed the two predictor variables of experience and attitude and provided the theoretical framework for this study.

Setting and Sample:
ED nurses working in a three-site tertiary care, Magnet-designated facility, which annually exceeds 120,000 ED patient visits.

Hypothesis:
Emergency nurse experience and attitude toward triage will affect a nurse’s ability to accurately triage ED patients.

Methods:
Measurement tools:
- Caring Nurse-Patient Interactions Scale® (CNPI-23)
- Triage Attitudes Survey
- Nurse Characteristic Collection Tool
- Triage Case Tracking Tool for ED nurses
- Triage Research Retrospective Review for raters

Raters:
- Clinical experts identified by clinical leadership as proficient in ESI® scoring

Interrater Reliability:
- Established using 50 case scenarios with Kappa statistic exceeding .80.

Analysis:
A descriptive correlational design will be used to describe the study sample and examine the relationships between experience, attitude, and accuracy of ESI® scoring for ED nurses.

Conclusions:
- This study is currently in the later stages of data collection.
- The outcomes of the study will contribute to the science of emergency nursing and have implications for developing a successful triage orientation program that could be applied to any emergency department.
- The primary investigator is a bedside staff nurse who has been supported by nursing administration, the nursing research department, and emergency physicians.

References: