

Picot Statement Paper: Nursing Staffing Issues, Medication Errors, and Patient Outcomes

Student's Name

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### **PICOT Statement/Question**

In patients within the medical-surgical unit (P), how does better nurse recruitment, proper nurse education and training, and reduced nurse-to-patient ratio (I) impact on medication errors and overall patient outcomes (O), as compared to nursing shortages and inadequate education (C), within a period of five months (T).

### **Problem**

Reduced patient outcomes and increased medication errors are important and common problems facing the modern healthcare system. The primary objective of nursing and the healthcare system in general is to foster the delivery of highest quality care to patients. Patients visit healthcare facilities so that their illnesses can be addressed, and they can enhance their health outcomes and quality of life. However, medication errors due to nursing staffing issues make their treatment experiences worse and leads to reduced quality of life. High nurse-to-patient ration has been associated with challenges regarding medication errors and reduced patient outcomes (Driscoll et al, 2018). Therefore, this practice paper details how to address the issues of medication errors and reduced patient outcomes within the medical-surgical unit.

### **Evidence-Based Solution**

Increasing the nurse-patient-ration, implementing better recruitment and retention strategies, and providing adequate nursing education and training are vital approaches that help reduce medication errors and improve the overall quality of care as well as patient outcomes. Although medication errors are preventable, they continue to cause harm to patients. Education and training are integral strategies that are tested and appropriate in helping reduce the medication errors committed by nurses (Miller, Haddad, & Phillips, 2016). On the other hand,

nurse-to-patient ratio influence many patient outcomes including reduced medication errors and in-hospital mortality (Driscoll et al, 2018).

### **Patient Care, Healthcare Agency, and Intervention**

The quality of patient care is an important objective of nurses and everyone else within the healthcare system. Reducing medication errors and improving patient safety is vital in ensuring the delivery of highest quality care. There are various approaches that can be utilized to enhance the quality of care by reducing medication errors. To address the issue of nursing shortages and inadequate nursing knowledge, the healthcare organization should implement proper training and development programs, improve the recruitment and retention functions, and increase the nurse to patient ration. This will ensure that nurses are aware of the best practices and that they do not experience stress and burnout due to work overload. The successful implementation of these interventions will go a long way towards ensuring enhanced quality of care and improved patient outcomes.

## References

- Driscoll, A., Grant, M. J., Carroll, D., Dalton, S., Deaton, C., Jones, I., ... Astin, F. (2018). The effect of nurse-to-patient ratios on nurse-sensitive patient outcomes in acute specialist units: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, 17(1), 6–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474515117721561>
- Miller, K., Haddad, L., & Phillips, D. K. (2016). Educational Strategies for Reducing Medication Errors Committed by Student Nurses: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Health Sciences Education*, 3(1). 1-12.