Evaluation of Hybrid Nursing Care Delivery Model Utilizing LVN’s on an Inpatient Unit

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Nursing is the largest workforce in the acute care setting, and it is facing a staffing shortage. Over the past decade, nurses have been leaving the bedside in record numbers to pursue other careers or retiring from the profession. This staffing challenge affects the nursing environment and results in poor patient outcomes such as increased medication errors, pressure sores, and falls. Organizations are challenged with staffing units safely to meet patient needs and optimize patient outcomes. The utilization of Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) on nursing units may be the answer to the staffing challenges that hospital organizations are facing across the nation. The purpose of this project is to determine if a hybrid nursing care delivery model utilizing LVNs will improve the incidence of patient falls on an inpatient unit. A staff mix to include LVNs has been identified as a potential way to maintain the care patients need amid a registered nursing shortage. The concept of nursing teams and integration of LVNs into the staffing mix of these teams can address the growing concern around staffing levels and patient care and adverse patient outcomes. This doctoral project will use pre- and post-intervention survey that will be given to the RNs to evaluate whether LVNs that are integrated into the unit skill mix influence patient falls and the concept of missed nursing care. The surveys will be handed out to the RNs three months before and after the implementation of a licensed vocational nurses on the inpatient unit. The data will be collected using the Kalisch Missed care and Teamwork survey. Information collected will include the level of nursing experience, the skill mix on the unit, staffing assignments, patient diagnosis and the fall data for a 36-bed telemetry unit specific to stroke and cardiac patients. Chief Nursing Officers and hospital administrators should consider a different approach to staffing their nursing units such as utilizing Licensed Vocational Nurses on inpatient units. Implementing a hybrid nursing care delivery model that utilizes LVNs can address staffing issues and improve fall outcomes in the acute care setting.

Keywords: nursing, staffing shortage, licensed vocational nurses, nursing outcomes, nursing models, skill mix, falls