Bridging the Experience Gap: An ED Escalation Guide

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**Introduction**

- More new graduates being hired as ED RNs
- Novice nurse challenges:
  - Difficulty with critical thinking, time management, prioritization - knowledge, skills, & critical thinking develop with experience
  - Common error - failure to recognize & intervene when patient is deteriorating
- Possible solution: Early Warning System
- SOS ED Escalation Guide to provide parameters for clinical deterioration

**Literature Review**

- According to Benner, a novice nurse is a beginner who must have rules from which to practice, as there is no experience from which to draw conclusions. (Marble, 2009)
- Failing to recognize (deterioration)...a successful intervention can only happen if deterioration is detected early, recognized as important, communicated to appropriate team members, & care escalated rapidly. (Wilson, S. et al, 2012)

**Methodology**

- SOS ED Escalation Guide - developed to be used as early warning system (EWS)
  - Adapted from med-surg
  - 3 levels of urgency based on VS parameters & Critical Symptoms
  - Evaluated & revised by multiple ED-certified physicians & RNs
  - Tested for effectiveness using quiz based on ESI handbook

**Results**

- Higher quiz scores correlated with years of experience & clinical expertise
- RNs with > 1 year of ED experience:
  - Consistent scores with & without availability of SOS Guide - Relied on their own judgment
- RNs with < 1 year of ED experience:
  - 25% improvement in scores with SOS ED Escalation Guide
  - Increased confidence in reporting symptoms

**Conclusions/Discussion**

- Recognition of clinical deterioration & rapid intervention are vital
  - Experience increases ability to assess & prioritize urgency of clinical presentations
  - RNs with < 1 year of ED experience may not recognize/report critical symptoms promptly without parameters
  - SOS Guide provides ED parameters

**Implications for Practice**

- An Early Warning System can be a valuable tool to help novice RNs to prioritize clinical symptoms
- The SOS Guide can be used by novice ED RNs to:
  - Increase confidence with assessments
  - Prioritize the urgency of clinical symptoms
  - Ensure pertinent clinical information is reported promptly to ED MDs

**References**

- References available upon request