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)

**Research Question**

- In an adult Emergency Department (ED), will the introduction of an early warning system guide improve the recognition of critical symptoms in ED nurses with less than 2 years of experience?

**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**
  - SOS Guide effectiveness:
    - Scenarios tested for reliability with experienced ED RNs
    - Quiz assesses prioritization based on 3 levels of urgency
    - 2 quizzes were given 1 week apart to ED RNs with varying experience
    - Quiz 1 (no Guide)
    - Quiz 2 (with Guide)

**Data Analysis**

- Logs of real-time use in orientation
- Logs kept over a 3 week period
- Sample size: 46
- Level of severity based on SOS: 28%, 48%, 30%
- ED MDs notified & orders received: 93% of pts.
- Likert scale used to assess confidence in notifying MD about patient condition - score 3.98 out of 5

**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