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Role of Nurses in Intensive Care Unit

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Critical care nurses provide most of the direct care to patients in life-threatening situations within the intensive care unit. ICU nurses commonly provide care to patients suffering from cardiac disease, brain injuries, accident victims, and patients recovering from complex surgeries that need frequently nursing care. The ICU nurse is the primary responsible for the care taking and treatment of patient's within an unstable and/or critical clinical situation. The nurse manages and coordinates nursing care through an in-depth and ongoing assessment, therapies and high-intensity interventions. In the Intensive Care Unit, a nurse takes crucial clinical decisions based on the best available scientific evidence, clinical experience and patient preferences. Intensive care unit nurses work very closely with physicians and other members of the health care team. They need to be skilled to assess patients' problems quickly and capable to use high-tech equipment. They use their advanced skills to care for patients who are critically ill and at high risk for life-threatening health problems. Critical care nurses or ICU nurses must be physically, mentally, and emotionally strong to work with seriously ill patients and their loved ones. Most patients in a critical care unit are physically and mentally unstable and they require respiratory and heart monitoring as well as treatment adjustments. The nurse is equipped with advanced skills that enable him to carry out specific, autonomous or complementary interventions of a technical-scientific, managerial, relational and educational nature; she/he plans healthcare assistance through scientifically validated tools; she/he identifies, analyzes, calculates and treats risks related to care provision by systematically evaluating healthcare outcomes. In this complicated environment, the individual clinical act acquires substantial importance in the overall care process and must be based on continuous education to ensure a safe and quality treatment. They are responsible for all care given to the patient, from medication administration to tracheotomy and other ventilator care, as well as constant monitoring of the patient for any alterations in their status. Responsibilities include monitoring, assessment, vital sign monitoring, ventilator management, medication administration, intravenous insertion and infusion, central line care, Swan-Ganz catheters, and maintenance of a running record of the patient's status. He or she must be prepared at all times to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other lifesaving techniques.