

A critical exploration of Surgical Nurses Perceptions of factors involved in decision-making on post-operative wound management

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Despite the fact that the postoperative wound care has changed dramatically in recent years, it has been identified that surgical nurses experience influences in clinical settings which hindered them in deciding how to manage postoperative wounds. The aim of the present study was to explore the surgical nurse’s perceptions on postoperative wound management and to identify factors involved in decision-making on this topic. The risk factors that influence the quality of wound management were also investigated.

A survey design was employed in combination with semi-structured interviews. A questionnaire was designed and distributed to all surgical nurses of seven surgical wards in a Cyprus Hospital (132 nurses) and seven surgical nurses randomly selected were interviewed.

Results revealed that the absence of nurse’s up-to-date knowledge and the absence of wound care guidelines negatively influence the postoperative wound care decision-making. Various researchers have attempted to measure nurse’s knowledge of wound management and the selection of the ideal technique (golden standard), and they found that there is a gap between theory and practice and a lack of in-depth knowledge among nurses (Russel and Reynolds, 2001; Aziz, 2009). Furthermore, nurses in Cyprus appear (and claim) to have less autonomy due to the medical staff’s role in deciding how to manage various wounds. Results also shown that workload is a major factor that influences the quality of postoperative wound care and increases the occupational risks in Cyprus nurse’s area of practice. These findings appear to be consistent with the relative literature carried out on this topic (Ferguson-Pare,1996; Mc Parland et al., 2000; Curtin, 2000; Blegen,2001).