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Organization of nursing care and stressful work characteristics.

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Abstract: Occupational stress is assumed to arise from social arrangements that are partially determined by the modes of organization of work. However, there is little systematic research on the extent to which modes of organizing nursing work are related to stressful characteristics of work.

This study explored the relationship between modes of organizing nursing and stress.

Survey responses on modes of organization of nursing were collected from 27 ward sisters and those on stressful work characteristics from 568 nurses working in 27 wards with different nursing modes.

Four different nursing modes (primary, modular, team and functional nursing) were not consistently associated with stress. Statistically significant associations involved only certain features of these modes and specific components of stress. After the effects of demographic and ward characteristics were controlled for, hierarchical regression analyses showed that opportunity to write nursing notes decreased the likelihood of nurses' stress because of problems in interpersonal relationships. Writing nursing notes is common in patient-focused nursing modes (primary and modular nursing). Other features of nursing modes were not associated with stress.

In general, nursing mode is not associated with stressful job characteristics. However, certain aspects of patient-focused nursing reduce the likelihood of interpersonal problems among staff.

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