

KNOWLEDGE OF INTENSIVE CARE NURSES IN SELECTED
CARE AREAS COMMONLY GUIDED BY PROTOCOLS

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of
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DECLARATION

I, Helen Catherine Perrie, declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Science in Nursing in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other university.

Signature

Signed at

On this date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the knowledge of nurses working in ICU with respect to pain management, glycaemic control and weaning from mechanical ventilation, care areas that are commonly guided by protocols. The effect of formal ICU training and years of ICU experience on this knowledge was elicited. A non-experimental, descriptive and contextual two-phase research design was used. The first phase of the study consisted of developing and validating a data collection instrument, using purposive sampling to select two groups of ICU nursing experts. The second phase of the study used the instrument developed in phase one to test the knowledge of nurses working in ICU.

The knowledge of 136 ICU nurses (68 ICU trained and 68 non-ICU trained) from three (n=3) public sector and two (n=2) private sector hospitals in Gauteng was tested using the data collection instrument developed by the researcher and the two groups of ICU nursing experts.

Knowledge of nurses, both ICU trained and non-ICU trained, working in the ICUs of three public and two private hospitals in Gauteng was found to be lacking in the three care areas tested in this study, namely pain management, glycaemic control and weaning from mechanical ventilation. The difference in knowledge between ICU trained and non-ICU trained nurses was statistically significant but relatively small. A weak correlation was found between level of knowledge and years of ICU experience.

Recommendations to address this lack of knowledge of ICU nurses are given for clinical nursing practice, nursing management and nursing educators, as well as recommendations for further research in this area.

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