

Abstract IFNA 16 (300 words)

Title: Factors affecting Critical Care Nurses Engagement with Families

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Background and Purpose

Proactive family engagement within Intensive Care Units (ICUs) can be a challenge due to the high-level nursing care required for critically ill patients. However, nurses are uniquely positioned to support families during their difficult experience.

The aim of this study was to examine factors that enable or hinder nurse-family engagement in adult ICUs across the globe.

Methods

A multi-site cross-sectional study was undertaken between July 2018 and December 2019 across continents, including Europe, Oceania, United States of America (USA), Asia, Middle East and Africa.

Participants were registered nurses working in 24 adult ICUs. Quantitative data were collected via a paper-and pencil survey using the 'Questionnaire on Factors that Influence Family Engagement' (QFIFE) (Hetland et al., 2017), with item scores ranging from 1-6, with 6 being the most influential factor. The QFIFE also includes open-ended questions. Quantitative data were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics, and qualitative data were analysed with content analysis.

Results

A total of 61 completed surveys (QFIFE) were returned; a response rate of 94%.

The most influential sub-scores were *patient acuity* ($Md = 5.0$) and *nurses' attitudes* ($Md = 4.6$), followed by *nurse workflow* ($Md = 4.0$) and *ICU environment* ($Md = 3.1$). The open-ended question suggested a further category that *Families are complex structures who respond uniquely to the ICU and patient* showing a complex picture of family engagement around the four areas of the survey. Some factors could 'tip the balance' and serve as an enabler or barrier to engagement.

Conclusions and Implications

Families are complex structures that respond uniquely to the intensive care situation. Although barriers and enablers of engagement have been identified previously in the literature, our findings suggest that key factors that can 'tip the balance' of family engagement. High acuity and nurses' attitudes may be key determinants of family engagement.

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