

The Application of the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Role in a Cardiovascular Patient Population



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KEYWORDS

• Acute care nurse practitioner • Acute care settings • Cardiovascular

KEY POINTS

- Acute care nurse practitioners (ACNP), in an acute care setting, have a vital role in the contribution to decreased length of hospital stay, readmission rates, and reduced patient mortality.
- The consensus model for APRN regulation allows for increased advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) care for patients.
- ACNPs serve as a liaison and advocate for patients and family members.
- The ACNP role combines evidence-based clinical practice with research, education, consultation, and leadership to provide high-quality, cost-effective patient care.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM/IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Currently, health care providers and health care systems are caught up in the whirlwind of the ever-changing state of the health care delivery systems. Much of this is owing to overarching political and hidden personal agendas. Health care systems are struggling to keep up with the evolving proposed health care changes while attempting to provide high-quality care, patient-centered holistic care, and equitable care in a cost-containment environment. Health care reform has empowered patients to have a voice in the delivery of their care. Providing true holistic patient-centered care is essential; patients' comments are publicized in consumer reports and are

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the key to reimbursement for services rendered. Additionally, patients' and family members' access to social media provide the ability to instantaneously publicize any type of information, positive or negative, about a particular physician, nurse, or hospital. As we progress toward health care reform and address the challenges and barriers to quality and costs of care, the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, Accountable Care Organizations will be evaluating and admitting more insured patients and thus are responsible for providing safer, quality, patient-centered care to more patients than ever. Our society will no longer tolerate payment for quantity of services. Conversely, consumers will reward health care providers and health care systems for the value of the care provided and the quality of the care. The law supports patients in taking ownership of their health care. Patients and their family members need to be educated and equipped with the tools to be more engaged in the implementation of the interventions identified in the individual tailored plan of care for each patient.

The nursing profession is now being transformed to assist in the restructuring of health care systems that can offer safe, patient-centered, quality, accessible and affordable care as outlined by the Institute of Medicine report, "The Future of Nursing: Leading Change and Advancing Health."¹ Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are being called to expand their roles and assist in closing the gap between insurance coverage and access to care. APRNs can fulfill their potential as providers as outlined by their educational preparation, training, national certification, and their states' specific scopes of practice.

More than ever, health care delivery systems need a multidisciplinary team approach to care for patients. The inclusion of acute care nurse practitioners (ACNPs) in this multidisciplinary approach to holistic, patient-centered care can bolster successful outcomes, such as decreased length of stay, decreased intensive care days, quality improvement initiatives, decreased readmission rates, fewer patient complications, and less patient morbidity and mortality in acute care settings. ACNPs are an invaluable investment for the hospital. ACNPs have the potential to assist hospitals in reducing costs while increasing quality outcomes.² The purpose of this review is to discuss the APRN evolving role in the climate of legislative health care change, emphasizing the expanding vital ACNP role in a cardiovascular setting, highlighted by a case study in which the ACNP was an integral part of the patient's successful outcome.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The role of the APRN evolved in the 1960s to fill a void to the nation-wide physician shortage. In the early 1990s, the utilization of APRNs was introduced into the hospital settings. APRNs can address a broad spectrum of patient issues from health promotion, diagnosing and prescribing for disease management, to coordination of care and, if required, palliative care. Each state within the United States has varying definitions and scopes of practice for an APRN. In addition to the national legislative health care changes, the nursing profession is addressing advanced practice registered nursing initiatives and regulatory processes for APRNs through the American Nurses Association. In July 2008, the document "Consensus Model for APRN Regulation: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification, and Education" was completed to address the standardization of regulatory processes for APRNs. This results in increased access to APRN care and increased mobility for APRNs. This association provides an APRN Regulatory Model that defines 4 advanced practice roles. These roles include nurse practitioner, nurse midwife, nurse anesthetist, and clinical nurse specialist.³ Through these 4 roles, APRNs care for patients within 6 population foci. These include family/individual

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