



PERIOPERATIVE NURSING EXPERIENCE IN BASIC NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Introduction

The Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC) believes that perioperative experience is the primary means by which student nurses attain knowledge and skills in the management of care for the surgical patient. Therefore, the perioperative experience is an essential component of the basic nursing program.

Whereas the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) has an ideal opportunity to influence future changes in basic nursing education, and whereas consistency in the basic preparation of nurses is desirable, ORNAC recommends CNA endorse the perioperative experience as an integral component of basic nursing education.

Perioperative Registered Nursing Practice

Perioperative registered nursing practice encompasses professional and clinical nursing activities, which focus on identifying and meeting the needs of the surgical patient while applying the nursing process in a caring manner. The perioperative Registered Nurse performs in a collaborative role with other members of the health care team.

Learning Assumptions

- The student nurse gains experience in the perioperative setting as a member of the multidisciplinary team through the utilization of a conceptual model, the nursing process, and standards of nursing practice. The student experiences independent and interdependent roles.
- The surgical suite provides the best environment for learning aseptic technique, surgical intervention, nursing critically ill patients during anaesthesia, and the collaborative role of perioperative nursing practice.
- The theory and clinical experiences are best retained when the student can immediately apply what has been learned in the clinical setting, as active participation is the most effective method of teaching and learning.

Advantages of Perioperative Experience

1. To The Student

Students gain knowledge and skills through the perioperative experience. Advantages include but are not limited to:

- 1.1 Participating in the active management of surgical patients during the preparation of patients, transportation and admission, assessment, induction, operative and immediate postoperative phases;
- 1.2 Developing confidence and assertiveness in the ability to make decisions regarding the care of the surgical patient;
- 1.3 Improving observational and leadership skills by practicing in an environment where activities must be performed quickly and accurately;
- 1.4 Selecting priorities in organizing workloads and developing critical-thinking skills;
- 1.5 Developing collaborative working relationships within the perioperative setting;
- 1.6 Communicating effectively with other members of the health care team and patients;
- 1.7 Participating in the activities of the multidisciplinary team in an environment which provides constant reinforcement for the perioperative Registered Nurse's independent and interdependent functions;
- 1.8 Developing specialized clinical skills;
- 1.9 Developing proficiency in the application of aseptic technique with increased confidence;
- 1.10 Increasing knowledge of anatomy and pathophysiology by observing the surgical intervention, how the physical body can be altered and the effect on patient care;
- 1.11 Recognizing how the surgical intervention impacts postoperative care and recovery;
- 1.12 Recognizing and utilizing the legal and ethical responsibility and accountability of the perioperative Registered Nurse and other health care team members in performing perioperative activities;
- 1.13 Providing clinical experience in a specialized area of nursing;

- 1.14 Developing the ability to adapt practices to meet individual patient care requirements; and
- 1.15 Developing the role of patient advocate as it relates to the surgical patient.

2. To the Patient

Patients benefit from the knowledge and skills that the student nurse gains from experience in the surgical suite. Advantages include but are not limited to:

- 2.1 Higher quality of care;
- 2.2 Decreased preoperative and postoperative apprehension, discomfort, and stress due to the Registered Nurse's understanding, empathetic approach, and confidence;
- 2.3 Improved education for the surgical patient and family due to the Registered Nurse's increased knowledge base; and
- 2.4 Reduced risk of infection through improved aseptic technique.

3. To the Employing Agency

The employing agency will benefit from the students perioperative nursing experience due to their increased understanding of effects of surgical intervention. Advantages include but are not limited to:

- 3.1 Increased interest in perioperative nursing after graduation, thereby enhancing recruitment and retention strategies;
- 3.2 Increased knowledge and ability to provide comprehensive care to a wider range of patients;
- 3.3 Registered Nurses with increased understanding of legal issues related to surgical intervention i.e., informed consent, counts;
- 3.4 Experience functioning as members of the surgical multidisciplinary team;
- 3.5 Fosters improved communication between departments; and
- 3.6 Potential for increased patient satisfaction.

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