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A study to assess the effectiveness of post pursue care by the ICU nurses on patient satisfaction and impact on quality of care in tertiary care unit, Trichy

¹Deepika, ²Jothilakshmi, ³Mary Nisha and ³Rohini Sharma

¹Deputy Clinical Nurse Specialist, Apollo Speciality Hospitals, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India

²Lead Nursing Administrator, Apollo Speciality Hospitals, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India

³Manager-Nursing, Apollo Speciality Hospitals, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India

⁴Vice Principal, Indraprastha School of Nursing, Delhi, India

Corresponding Author: Deepika

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Abstract

Background of the study: The transition of critically ill patients from the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) to the general ward is a high-risk period susceptible to clinical instability and care gaps. This project addressed the critical need for structured post-discharge surveillance of ICU patients to enhance patient safety and experience in inpatient area set ups. Post Pursue care is the Post-ICU follow-up care refers to care of ICU patients for 48-72 hours after de-escalation from ICU.

Objective: The objective of the study is to maximize the patient satisfaction and improving core quality of patient care metrics (reducing early readmissions).

Research methodology: Quantitative - quasi experimental research design was used. Patient who was de-escalated from MICU, CTICU and CCU to wards were included for data collection. Patients who were critically ill, terminal illness, restless agitated patients were excluded from the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 45 study participants after implementation of follow up care by nurses. Initiated a proactive intervention: the deployment of Post Pursue Care, wherein specialized ICU nurses extend their expertise to provide surveillance and direct care for the crucial initial 72 hours following patient transition to the general ward environment.

Results: The implementation of Post Pursue Care achieved exceptional outcomes: 1. Patient Satisfaction: 100% of participants reported being highly or extremely satisfied with the continuity of care and its positive impact on their health condition. 98% were extremely satisfied with the compassion of the visiting ICU nurses. 2. Quality & Safety Impact: The intervention led to a 50% reduction in a critical safety metric. ICU returns within 48 hours decreased from 18 to 9 cases (post-implementation).

Conclusion: Post-ICU transitional programs are designed to detect early deterioration, to promote continuity and safety, to support emotional and physical recovery also to enhance patient and family satisfaction.

Keywords: Effectiveness, post pursue care, post ICU transitional care, post ICU follow up care

1. Introduction

The transition from ICU to ward is a high-risk period marked by clinical instability, care discontinuity, and Communication gaps. Post-ICU transitional care bridges this gap by ensuring safe handover and early monitoring ultimately reducing preventable readmissions and mortality. Transitional care refers to a coordinated and continuous process that facilitates the movement of patients from one healthcare setting to another while maintaining the quality and safety of care [5] (Coleman & Boult, 2003). Nurses play a central coordinating role in transitional care through conducting early follow-up visits after ICU discharge, identifying early warning signs of deterioration, educating patients and families about care continuity, facilitating interprofessional communication, supporting emotional recovery through reassurance and counselling. Bench *et al.* (2022) found that nurse-led follow-up programs increased

continuity and safety awareness among ward teams [7].

The prevalence of readmission to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) was demonstrably high, compounded by frequent instances of non-adherence to established protocols observed among ward nurses tasked with the ongoing management of these critically recovered patients. This operational shortfall underscored a critical need for specialized competencies in caring for this vulnerable cohort. Concurrently, patient grievances and recommendations concerning the seamlessness and consistency of nursing service delivery were notably elevated. This project addressed the critical need for structured post-discharge surveillance of ICU patients to enhance patient safety and experience in inpatient area set ups. Post Pursue care is the Post-ICU follow-up care refers to care of ICU patients for 48-72 hours after de-escalation from ICU. The objective of the study is to maximize the

patient satisfaction and improving core quality of patient care metrics (reducing early readmissions).

2. Materials and Methods

Research Approach of this study was quantitative research approach - Quasi experimental design was used. Dependent variable of the study was patient satisfaction and quality of care. Independent variable of the study was post pursue care by ICU nurses. Data collection was carried for the period of 6 months (January 2025 to June 2025). Permission was obtained from the Head of Department, Nursing and Medical services - Apollo Speciality Hospitals, Trichy to conduct the study. Patient who was de-escalated from MICU, CTICU and CCU to wards were included for data collection. Patients who were critically ill, terminal illness, restless agitated patients were excluded from the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 40 study participants after implementation of follow up care by nurses.

Structured questionnaire (Microsoft forms) link was made to collect the feedback of patient satisfaction and post pursue care to analyze the outcome (patients who received post pursue care at Apollo Speciality Hospitals, Trichy). Descriptive statistics (measures of frequency - frequency & percentage) was used to analyze the data. Statistical data to measure the quality outcomes were retrieved from the nominal and Quality indicator records of ICUs. The patient satisfaction survey tool comprises of 10 statements to rate the nursing services and follow up care provided by the ICU nurses. The scoring interpretation was made as follows 5 - Extremely satisfied, 4- Very satisfied, 3- Satisfied, 2 - slightly satisfied 1- not satisfied.

Post Pursue care - Follow up visit protocols

- Person - ICU nurse who was assigned with the patient during patient admission in the ICU. The same person has to shift to ward. Post shifting reassure the patient and introduce the ward nurse and also orient the patient about post pursue care and follow up visits.
- Each visit constitutes of minimum of 15 - 20 minutes and the same person has to visit every day for 3 consecutive days in wards (72 hours).
- During Visit - Quick check on A to I
- Escalation - Liaise with the ward in charge and assigned ward nurse for any concerns to be addressed. Liaise with the Intensivist and update the condition of the patient and intervene if necessary (as per intensivist order)
- Outcome measures - Patient satisfaction was assessed on Day 4 regarding nursing services and post pursue care by ICU nurses by the anonymous person from the nursing admin team through Microsoft link.

Quick check on A to I - Quick check on A to I was performed by the ICU nurses during post ICU follow up visits.

Acknowledge and introduce yourself (nurse) with patient and family members.

A: Airway – Patency

B: Breathing - Breathing pattern

C: Circulation - Pulse, Capillary refilling

D: Disability -Level of consciousness assessment through GCS

E: Examine - look at the patient completely (tubes, lines, drains, etc.) head to toe

F: Full set of vital signs

Note any changes in the following signs: pulse (carotid, brachial, radial), pupils, breathing, level of consciousness, blood pressure, and skin color and temperature.

G: Give comfort measures

Continue to rest and reassure. Provide comfort measures

H: History of care after shifting to ward & its feedback

I: Inspect Pressure prone surface

Inspect for discolorations, tenderness, warmth & position changing.

3. Results

The implementation of Post Pursue Care achieved exceptional outcomes. Among the study participants, 53% percentage of the patients were between age group of 50 to 70 years. Out of 45 study participants, majority of the patients (14) average length of stay in ICU was between 3 to 4 days.

Major findings of the patient satisfaction survey are as follows, 100% of patients were highly satisfied on experiencing continuity of care by nurses through the post pursue care - follow up visits by ICU nurses. 100% of participants reported being highly or extremely satisfied with the continuity of care and its positive impact on their health condition. 98% were extremely satisfied with the compassion of the visiting ICU nurses. 98% of the patients were extremely satisfied regarding communication and professionalism of visiting nurse. 93% of study participants expressed the experience of nurses' acknowledgement during the visit. 96% of the study participants were extremely satisfied about nursing service during ICU stay. 96% of the patients were extremely satisfied on addressing queries and concerns during visit. 100% of the patients felt very happy to recommend this follow up care to other patients.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Patient satisfaction on Nursing services after Post pursue care by ICU nurses, N=45

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Overall patient satisfaction level post implementation of post pursue care by ICU nurses		
Patient satisfaction level	f	%
Extremely satisfied	34	75
Very satisfied	11	25
Satisfied	0	0
Slightly satisfied	0	0
Not satisfied	0	0

With respect to Table 1. 75% of the study participants were extremely satisfied and 25% of the participants were very satisfied with the post pursue care by ICU nurses.

Table 2: Incidence of Return to ICU after de-escalation from ICU before and after implementation of post pursue care - follow up by ICU nurses

Return to ICU after de-escalation from ICU before Vs after implementation of post pursue care - follow up by ICU nurses.		
Return to ICU - Quality Indicator	July - Dec 2024	Jan - June 2025
Return to ICU within 48 hours	18	9
Total number of Admission in ICU	2327	2296

Quality & Safety Impact: As shown in table 2. the intervention led to a 50% reduction in a critical safety metric. ICU returns within 48 hours decreased from 18 cases (pre-implementation: July-December 2024) to 9 cases (post-implementation).

4. Discussion & Conclusion

Studies indicate that 10-15% of ICU patients are readmitted within 72 hours of transfer due to unresolved physiological instability or communication lapses (Stelfox *et al.*, 2015; Chaboyer *et al.*, 2019). ICU Readmission Rate was reduced from 9.2% to 6.7%. The authors observed a tendency toward decreased readmission rates one year after RRT implementation (the p-value was 0.093, indicating a trend near statistical significance). They explicitly concluded that the intervention resulted in a sustained decrease in readmission rates [15] (Bergamasco e Paula *et al.* 2017). Similarly, after implementation of post pursue care - follow up visits by ICU nurses, patient return to ICU within 48 hours was drastically reduced from 18 to 9 (Jan 2025 - June 2025) which contributes to 50% of impact in patient safety and quality aspects.

Rawal *et al.* (2023) emphasized that post-ICU monitoring reduces preventable mortality and aligns with the principles of person-centered care [17]. Post-ICU transitional programs are designed to detect early deterioration, to promote continuity and safety, to support emotional and physical recovery also to enhance patient and family satisfaction. Studies indicated that Patient satisfaction scores significantly increased in the intervention group (47.64 ± 5.65) compared to the control group ($p < 0.000$) [16] (Tabanejad *et al.* 2016).

Similarly, 100% of participants in the present study reported being highly or extremely satisfied with the continuity of care and its positive impact on their health condition. 98% were extremely satisfied with the compassion of the visiting ICU nurses.

Nursing Implications: An extensive experimental study can be conducted for larger number of samples in the health care settings. These kind of post pursue follow up visits can be extending to other departments after de-escalation of patients like post Cath visits by Cath lab nurses, Post-Operative visits by Operation theatre nurses, Post scopy visits by endoscopy nurses.

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6. Conflict of Interest

Not available.

7. Financial Support

Not available.

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