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Jordanian patients' perception of stressors in critical care units: A questionnaire survey

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Abstract

Background

Critical care units' (CCUs) environment has been regarded as a leading stressor because of the complex nature of patient's health problems that require an extensive use of very sophisticated technology. Multiple and complex care predominates in CCUs have been described by patients to be stressful and emotionally demanding.

Rationale

Number of CCUs in Jordan has been increasing and so does the advanced technology, which calls for adaptability in dealing with unit stressors as they affect patient recovery and rehabilitation.

Objectives

To identify the principal physical and psychological stressors as perceived by Jordanian patients in CCUs and to examine the effects of selected patients' characteristics on their perception of stressors.

Methods

In this cross-sectional study, data was collected from 165 patients, 2–3 days after being discharged from CCUs in two Jordanian governmental hospitals. A structured interview guide including the Intensive Care Unit Environmental Stressor Scale was used.

Results

Having tubes in nose or mouth, being in pain, not able to sleep and hearing the buzzers and alarms from the machinery, being thirsty, and not being in control of your-self were considered by patients as the main stressors. Psychological stressors were the least stressful items identified by patients. Marital status, educational level, age, and income were the most significant characteristics which affected patients' perception of stressors.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that single and older patients with low income and low education experience more difficulties than their counterparts. Nurses must utilize more effective communication techniques and interventions to relieve patients' pain, and provide an atmosphere in which rest is possible, with less light, noise, and the fewest possible interruptions. Although the results of this study indicate the need to provide the best possible physical care, it is equally important to give adequate attention to patients' and families' psychological aspects.



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Keywords

Stressors; Jordan; Critically ill patients

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