

Book Review

Nursing-Sensitive Outcomes: State of the Science

Edited by Diane M. Doran

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Nursing-Sensitive Outcomes: State of the Science is a collection of commissioned chapters that advance our understanding of the effect of nursing care. The monitoring of nursing outcomes can be traced back to the time of Florence Nightingale. In 1885, Nightingale demonstrated how poor standards of care during the Crimean War resulted in high morbidity and mortality rates. Throughout the decades, nursing science has evolved from the study of care processes to research on the impact of care interventions. Randomized clinical trials have provided solid evidence on what is referred to as nursing-sensitive outcomes. This is the point at which the book begins.

The editor of *Nursing-Sensitive Outcomes*, Diane M. Doran, notes that “with the demand for professional and financial accountability, nurses are challenged to identify and delineate their contributions.” This challenge comes from greater expectations on the part of the public and increased performance monitoring. Similarly, nurses want information on what is important to those who receive their care; they want to know that they are making a difference.

In the first chapter, contributors Dorothy Pringle and Diane Doran address the question “Why study outcomes?” Doran states that the book’s contributors offer a synthesis and critical review of the state of the science on nursing-sensitive outcomes specific to nurses’ scope of practice and interventions. The book provides solid evidence throughout demonstrating that nursing care does make a difference. The authors’ comprehensive critiques of the studies and instruments used to measure outcomes (such as functional status, self-care, and symptom management) are summarized in a helpful table format. In her own chapter on functional status, Doran provides an in-depth review of the factors that influence activities of daily living. This sets the stage for Souraya Sidani’s detailed chapter on self-care, a complex concept. Sidani notes that although there are a number of studies linking self-care to nursing, additional studies that evaluate this impact are essential.

In the chapter on symptom management, Sidani reviews the most highly self-reported outcome indicators: fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and dyspnea. She demonstrates that, if not managed, symptoms (particularly those in chronic illness) can have a devastating impact on the individual and the health-care system. In a chapter on pain as a symptom, Judy Watt-Watson makes a strong case for the inadequacy of pain management over the past 30 years, despite the fact that pain is the most common reason why individuals consult health professionals and the most common cause of disability and diminished quality of life.

Peggy White and Linda McGillis Hall's chapter on patient safety outcomes is timely and necessary. The authors provide a detailed review of the research on patient safety and adverse outcomes related to medication errors, nosocomial infections, patient falls, and pressure ulcers. Heather Laschinger and Joan Almost link patient safety to patient satisfaction. In doing so, they provide a comprehensive review of current instruments and the many challenges in measuring patient satisfaction. In the following chapter, McGillis Hall relates the concept of patient satisfaction to nurses' job satisfaction. She notes that while the association is an important one, it is the subject of limited research. McGillis Hall also provides a valuable analysis of the studies investigating the relationship between nurses' job satisfaction and patient outcomes.

The final chapter, Claire Mallette's contribution on minimum data sets, delineates the need for baseline data before and after nursing interventions. The author describes the need for computerized systems as well as data sets that are multidisciplinary and that cut across the continuum of care.

The editor of *Nursing-Sensitive Outcomes* states that the volume constitutes a valuable resource for graduate students, researchers, and policy-makers. The book will also be useful for administrators and nurse leaders seeking pertinent information on nursing-sensitive outcomes.

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