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The Work Tasks of the Family Nurse in the Care, Treatment and Education of Postoperative Patients in the Municipality of Veles

Radni zadaci porodične medicinske sestre u njezi, liječenju i edukaciji postoperativnih pacijenata u Općini Veles

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The postoperative period is an important phase in the patient's recovery after surgery, which requires continuous health care, proper care of the surgical wound, monitoring of the health condition, timely application of therapy and recognition of possible complications. After discharge from hospital treatment, the family nurse plays an important role in providing professional support in the home, as well as in connecting the patient, the family and the health system.

Aim: to analyze the work tasks of the family nurse in the care, treatment and education of postoperative patients in the Municipality of Veles.

Materials and methods: The research was quantitative and descriptive, using a structured questionnaire among 30 postoperative patients and 10 family nurses. The patients' experiences with home postoperative care, the education received the occurrence of complications and satisfaction with the health service, as well as the professional activities, challenges and competencies of family nurses will be examined.

Results: The analysis showed that regular nursing care and health education contribute to a safer recovery, better information of patients and a reduction in the risk of postoperative complications.

Conclusion: The issue is important for the promotion of primary health care and for improving the quality of home care for postoperative patients.

Keywords: family nurse, postoperative care, treatment, education, home health care, postoperative complications, Municipality of Veles

SAŽETAK

Uvod: Postoperativni period je važna faza u oporavku pacijenta nakon operacije, koja zahtijeva kontinuiranu zdravstvenu njegu, pravilnu njegu operativne rane, praćenje zdravstvenog stanja, pravovremenu primjenu terapije i prepoznavanje mogućih komplikacija. Nakon otpusta sa bolničkog liječenja, porodična medicinska sestra igra važnu ulogu u pružanju stručne podrške u kući, kao i u povezivanju pacijenta, porodice i zdravstvenog sistema.

Cilj: analiza radnih zadataka porodične medicinske sestre u njezi, liječenju i edukaciji postoperativnih pacijenata u općini Veles. Istraživanje će biti kvantitativno i deskriptivno, korištenjem strukturiranog upitnika među 30

postoperativnih pacijenata i 10 porodičnih medicinskih sestara.

Materijali i metode: Ispitatana su iskustva pacijenata s kućnom postoperativnom njegom, primljena edukacija, pojava komplikacija i zadovoljstvo zdravstvenom uslugom, kao i profesionalne aktivnosti, izazovi i kompetencije porodičnih medicinskih sestara.

Rezultati: Analiza je pokazala da redovna medicinska njega i zdravstveno obrazovanje doprinose sigurnijem oporavku, boljoj informiranosti pacijenata i smanjenju rizika od postoperativnih komplikacija.

Zaključak: Ovo je važno za promociju primarne zdravstvene zaštite i za poboljšanje kvalitete kućne njege postoperativnih pacijenata.

Ključne riječi: porodična medicinska sestra, postoperativna njega, liječenje, edukacija, kućna zdravstvena njega, postoperativne komplikacije, općina Veles

INTRODUCTION

Modern health care increasingly emphasizes the need for continuing care, especially for patients continuing their recovery at home after surgery. The postoperative period does not end with discharge from hospital, but continues through monitoring, care, treatment and health education. During this phase, the patient may experience pain, limited mobility, fear, uncertainty, the need for assistance with daily activities, and the risk of complications, such as surgical wound infection, bleeding, swelling, thrombosis, or inadequate response to therapy.

The family nurse is an important member of the primary health care team. Her work is not limited to the technical performance of medical interventions, but it also includes assessing the patient's condition, planning and implementing nursing activities, health education, counseling, family support, and coordination with the family doctor and other healthcare professionals. She has direct insight into the life and treatment conditions of the patient, which enables timely identification of risks and taking appropriate measures (1).

In postoperative patients, the work tasks of a family nurse most often relate to controlling and dressing the surgical wound, monitoring vital signs, assessing pain, administering prescribed therapy, monitoring possible adverse reactions, maintaining health records, and providing clear guidelines for home care.

The educational role is particularly important, as the patient and his family need to know how to properly maintain hygiene, when to seek medical help, how to take therapy and recognize symptoms that may indicate a complication (2).

The choice of topic is important given that quality postoperative care at home can contribute to faster and safer recovery, reduced rehospitalizations, and greater satisfaction of the patient. In that regard, the analysis of the family nurse role in the municipality of Veles is important for understanding the needs of patients, professional tasks of nurses, and the possibilities for improving nursing care in the community (3).

AIM

The aim of the paper was to identify and analyze the work tasks of a family nurse in the care, treatment and education of postoperative patients in the municipality of Veles, with an emphasis on the importance of continuing health care after discharge from hospital. Based on the set goal, an attempt was made to examine the degree of involvement of family nurses in home postoperative care, the type of interventions they perform, the method of communication with patients and families, as well as the importance of health education in preventing complications and improving treatment outcomes.

Specific objectives of the work:

– To describe the most common nursing activities for postoperative patients at home;

– To determine how well are the patients informed are about proper surgical wound care, therapy, and possible complication signs;
– To assess the level of patients' satisfaction with postoperative care received;
– To analyze the experiences and challenges of family nurses in their work with postoperative patients;
To point out the importance of education as part of professional nursing care.

It was expected that the work would contribute to a clearer definition of the family nurse's role in postoperative care and highlight the need for a systematic approach to monitoring, treating, and educating patients in the home setting.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional study. This methodological approach was suitable for obtaining data on current conditions, experiences, attitudes and needs related to postoperative home care. The descriptive nature of the research enabled a systematic description of the role and work tasks of a family nurse, while the quantitative approach enabled the processing and comparison of the obtained data.

The research was conducted in the territory of the municipality of Veles. The study included two groups of respondents: postoperative patients and family nurses. The first group consisted of 30 postoperative patients discharged for home treatment after surgery who required monitoring, care, treatment or education. The second group consisted of 10 family nurses who were in contact with patients in the postoperative period (4).

Inclusion criteria: adults, patients in the postoperative period, patients being treated or recovering at home, and persons who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

Criteria for inclusion of family nurses: active professional work in primary or home health care and experience in work with postoperative patients. The participation of all respondents was voluntary and anonymous.

A structured survey questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The patients' questionnaire contained questions on basic sociodemographic data, type of postoperative care, frequency of home visits, information on wound care, therapy, nutrition, physical activity, symptom recognition, and level of satisfaction with the healthcare service provided. The questionnaire intended for family nurses included questions about their work tasks, how they assess patients, the interventions they most often perform, educational activities, communication with patients, and professional challenges (5).

The data collection procedure was carried out after previously informing the respondents about the purpose of the research. Respondents were informed that the data would be used exclusively for scientific research purposes, that personal data would not be published, and that they could withdraw from participation at any time. Thus, compliance with the basic ethical principles was ensured: voluntariness, anonymity, confidentiality and protection of the respondents' dignity (6).

The tasks of a family nurse were analyzed in several areas including: health assessment, surgical wound care, vital parameters monitoring, pain control, application and supervision of therapy, risk recognition, counseling on nutrition and physical activity, patient and family education, documentation management, and cooperation with the primary care physician. Accordingly, more complete picture of the practical role of the nurse in the postoperative period was obtained (7).

The collected data were processed using descriptive statistics. The results were presented through numbers, percentages, and comparative analysis between patients' and family nurses' responses. The interpretation was focused on whether the data obtained confirmed the importance of regular home care and health education in reducing the risk of complications and improving the quality of recovery.

Possible limitations of the study included the relatively small sample, the subjectivity of the responses, and the dependence of the data on the experience and memory of the respondents. However, this approach was appropriate for gaining initial insights into the state of practice and for identifying areas where postoperative patient care could be improved (8).

RESULTS

Table 1 **Sex of the Respondents**.

Sex	**Number**	**%**
Male	28	46.7
Female	32	53.3

Table 2 **Age of the Respondents.**

Age	**Number**	**%**
18–40	14	23.3
41–60	25	41.7
Over 60	21	35.0

Table 3 **Type of Surgery.**

Type	**Number**	**%**
Abdominal	20	33.3
Orthopedic	18	30.0
Gynecological	12	20.0
Other	10	16.7

Table 4 **Did the Family nurse visit the patient at home?**

Answer	**Number**	**%**
Yes	49	81.7
No	11	18.3

Table 5 **The most common tasks of a nurse**.

Task	% of patients
Monitoring vital parameters	88%
Wound dressing	76%
Providing therapy	71%
Nutrition education	69%
Hygiene tips	83%
Family support	61%

Table 6 **Satisfaction with the work of the nurse.**

Answer	**Number**	**%**
Excellent	31	51.7
Very good	19	31.7
Good	8	13.3
Dissatisfied	2	3.3

Table 7 **Did education help faster recovery?**

Answer	**Number**	**%**
Yes	52	86.7
No	8	13.3

DISCUSSION

The family nurse plays a significant role in home postoperative care.

- The most common activities are dressing, therapy, and monitoring.
- Patient's education significantly contributes the proces of recovery.
- Patients in Veles showed high satisfaction with the services.

Postoperative care is a complex process that requires organized monitoring, timely intervention and continuous education of the patient. In this process, the family nurse has an important professional role, as she provides health support during the period when the patient returns to the home environment and still requires professional assisstance.

The tasks of a family nurse include several interrelated activities: health assessment, surgical wound care and control, vital signs monitoring, pain assessment, therapy administration, prevention and early recognition of complications, counseling, documentation and cooperation with the physician. These activities have preventive, therapeutic and educational importance (9).

Education of the patient and his family is one of the most important segments of postoperative care. Through clear and comprehensible instructions on hygiene, nutrition, movement, taking therapy and recognizing warning symptoms, the patient's independence increases thus reducing the possibility of inappropriate behavior at home (10).

It is important that the family nurse be recognized as an active provider of primary health care and as an important participant in postoperative treatment. Improving medical care, regular professional education, better organization of home visits and strengthened communication between healthcare professionals can contribute to better quality, safer and more humane care of postoperative patients in the municipality of Veles.

The results of the conducted research indicate the significant role of the family nurse in the process of postoperative care, treatment and education among patients in the municipality of Veles. The data obtained show that the majority of respondents were women (53.3%), while male patients participated with 46.7%. This difference is small, but may indicate a higher prevalence of surgical interventions in the female population, especially gynecological surgical procedures (11).

With regard to age, the highest percentage of patients was between 41 and 60 years old (41.7%), which was expected given that chronic diseases and conditions requiring surgical treatment were more common in this age group. There was also a significant number of patients over 60 (35%), whose recovery after surgery was slower and required more intensive medical care. The most common surgical procedures were abdominal surgeries (33.3%) and orthopedic interventions (30%). Those patients had an increased need for wound control, pain, mobility, and monitoring for possible complications. This additionally emphasizes the need for regular home visits and the active involvement of the family nurse.

A particularly significant data was that 81.7% of patients were visited at home by a family nurse.

This data shows the good organization of primary health care in Veles and the availability of outpatient nursing services. Home visits enable timely detection of complications, monitoring of health status, and psychological support for the patient and family (12)

Analysis of work tasks shows that the most common activities were monitoring vital signs (88%), advising on personal hygiene (83%), dressing surgical wounds (76%), and providing therapy (71%). These results are in line with modern standards of nursing practice, according to which the nurse has a central role in monitoring the patient, preventing infections and improving general condition.

Nutrition and lifestyle education was provided to 69% of patients, which is very important given that proper nutrition and an appropriate lifestyle directly affect the healing process.

In addition, 61% of patients received support and counseling from their family, which shows that the nurse does not only work with the patient, but also with the patient's immediate environment.

Satisfaction with the work of the family nurse was high, with 51.7% of patients rating the service as excellent and 31.7% as very good. This result indicates trust in medical staff and a positive perception of service quality. Only a small number of respondents were dissatisfied (3.3%), which might be a consequence of individual expectations, insufficient visit frequency or organizational reasons.

Especially important is the fact that 86.7% of patients believed that the education received from the nurse contributed to faster recovery. This confirms that the educational role of the nurse is as important as practical care. An informed patient can more easily follow the therapy, take proper care of

the wound and recognize warning symptoms in a timely manner.

In summary, the results show that the family nurse plays a key role in the postoperative period through care, monitoring, treatment and health education. Her presence contributes to reducing complications, faster recovery and a better quality of life for patients in the municipality of Veles.

Study limitations

The research was conducted on a relatively small sample of 60 respondents and in one municipality, thus the results cannot be fully generalized to the entire country. Future research with a larger number of respondents and comparisons between different regions is recommended.

Recommendations:
• Increasing the number of home visits for patients at risk.
• Continuous education of medical staff.
• Improving coordination between surgeons, family doctors and nurses.
• Development of a home postoperative care program in the local community.

CONCLUSION

Postoperative care is a complex process that requires organized monitoring, timely intervention and continuous education of the patient. In this process, the family nurse has an important professional role, as she provides health support during the period when the patient returns to the home environment and still require professional assisstance. Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that the family nurse has a significant and irreplaceable role in the postoperative care of patients in the Municipality of Veles. It is important that the family nurse be recognized as an active provider of primary health care and an important participant in postoperative treatment. Improving medical care, regular professional education, better organization of home visits and strengthened communication between healthcare professionals can contribute to better quality, safer and more humane care of postoperative patients in the municipality of Veles.

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