

Exploring the challenges experienced by Intensive Care Unit nurses during the organ donation process: a scoping review

Background

Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurses play an important role in facilitating the organ donation process (Holthe and Husby, 2023). However, caring for potential organ donors and their families can be a challenging prospect for many ICU nurses. Given the heterogeneous nature of donor care (Emilie *et al.* 2022), a scoping review to explore available evidence on the challenges that ICU nurses experience during the organ donation process is valuable.

Aims

To explore the challenges experienced by ICU nurses during the organ donation process and identify models or strategies that may support them when caring for potential organ donors and their families during the organ donation process.

Methods

The review followed JBI methodology for scoping reviews and was reported using PRISMA-ScR. The following databases were searched for eligible studies from the first available start date of the individual database to December 2023: MEDLINE, Embase, PsycINFO, OVID EMCARE (all via Ovid), Cochrane library, Scopus, Web of Science and CINAHL (via EBSCO). A public representative with family experience of organ donation was involved in developing the protocol and search strategy. The review protocol was registered on Open Science Framework.

Results

A total of 29 studies met the inclusion criteria. Most studies were qualitative (n=20) and most originated from non-European countries (n=21). Seven key challenges were identified: direct patient care, care of the families, concept of brain death, ethical challenges, emotional challenges, challenges around communication and organizational challenges. Support models include debriefing and reflection, training and education, organisational support and availability of guidelines and protocols for organ donation.

Conclusion

ICU nurses experience several challenges during the organ donation process. Improved understanding of the nature of challenges can facilitate the implementation of supportive strategies which will ultimately improve the quality of care, consent rates and the overall experience of nurses and donors' families.

References

Emilie G et al (2022). Intensive Care Nurses' Experiences of Caring during the Organ Donor Process in Sweden - a Qualitative Study. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 15(2), pp. 720-726

Holthe E and Husby V (2023). Barriers to Organ Donation: A Qualitative Study of Intensive Care Nurses' Experiences, *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, 42(5), pp. 277-285

Biography

After 18 years as a critical care nurse, Nelson Selvaraj joined the School of Healthcare Sciences, Cardiff University in 2015 as a Lecturer in Adult Nursing. He was awarded the RCBC Wales First into Research Fellowship in 2023. He won the prestigious Royal College of Nursing (Wales) 'Nurse of the Year Award 2023' for 'Nurse Education'.