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Nurse's Role in the Modern Resuscitation Era

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: This paper explores the existing literature and discusses the new roles that have emerged and have been given to nurses in the modern resuscitation era.

METHODS: Keywords such as cardiac arrest, resuscitation, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), nursing role, and rapid response nurse were entered into Medline, Medscape and Science Direct databases. The relative literature found was then compared and conclusions were drawn concerning the new nursing roles.

RESULTS: Throughout the years, factors such as improvement in nursing education, increased needs for expert nurses due to the requirements of specialized fields of medicine, and an increase noted in the autonomy of the nursing role have led to a change in nurses' responsibilities during CPR. Therefore, the traditional roles of nurses during CPR which held them responsible for limited duties, such as preparing the drugs administered and monitoring the patients' vital signs, have evolved; hence the nurse has become a more active member of the multidisciplinary team.

CONCLUSION/PERSPECTIVE: The new nursing roles are on a good explorative track in several hospitals. Although they have not yet been implemented in the Hellenic health care setting, nurses are optimistic that their role during cardiopulmonary resuscitation is slowly but steadily improving. More nurses are interested in continuing education and training, in increasing their knowledge and improving their skills. As a result, nurses who work in departments such as Cardiology, Cardiac Care Units, Intensive Care Units and Accident and Emergency Departments where events of cardiac arrest are more common are more involved in attending CPR seminars. Finally, in the event of a cardiac arrest, nurses are perceived by the community to be competent and ready to perform effective CPR. Irrespective of their level, nurses have a professional responsibility to maintain competence in CPR through regular updates.

KEY WORDS: *cardiac arrest, resuscitation, CPR, nursing role, rapid response nurse, witnessed resuscitation, external defibrillators*

ABBREVIATIONS

CPR= cardiopulmonary resuscitation

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