ABSTRACT

RESEARCH SUBJECT: Relationships between nurse staffing and patient outcome variables.

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There is considerable debate among researchers on methods of determining key variables used to measure patient outcomes. There is ongoing evidence that more specific outcome measures unique to the nursing profession are needed as nursing practice evolves. The purpose of this study is to assess the key variables used in research and practice regarding nurse staffing and patient care outcomes based on review of literature and from the perspective of an expert panel.

A purposive sample of twenty to thirty nurses specializing in administration, leadership, education, quality management and staff development will participate in a three round Delphi study. The survey will be conducted via the internet and email using a four item nominal Likert scale. The expert panel will rate the importance and usefulness of key variables which have been shown to be directly related to nurse staffing and patient outcomes as well as recommend new variables. This study assesses current evidence based variables and generates new variables from the perspective of a panel of nursing experts. This is a continuation of the study conducted by Aiken, Clarke, Sermeus, Van den Heed, and Vleugals (2007) and will
replicate the survey tool used at a local level. Findings of this study will contribute to the ongoing knowledge of quality improvement and measurement of nursing care. This study will also provide nursing professionals with quantitative and qualitative, peer reviewed methods of evaluating nurse staffing, patient outcomes variables and the relationship between them.