

THE INFLUENCE OF NURSING AUDIT ON THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE IN THE CONTEXT OF PRIMARY CARE; AN EXPERIENCE REPORT

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ABSTRACT: Auditing in the nursing area is a fundamental process that aims to guarantee the quality and efficiency of health services provided to patients. This field of administrative nursing activities has evolved over time, seeking to ensure that healthcare is provided in accordance with established standards and best clinical practices. This work aims to highlight the importance of management and control, evaluation, regulation and auditing in nursing and its direct influence on the quality of services provided within primary health care units. Through an experience report type study. Through auditing, nursing professionals can identify areas of deficiency, ensure compliance with policies and procedures, as well as optimize resources and promote patient safety. Evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of nursing services, including reviewing medical records, practices, identifying problems and planning and implementing solutions, thereby contributing to patient safety, resource optimization, regulatory compliance and continuous improvement of healthcare services

Keywords: Health Services Administration, Primary Health Care, Nursing Audit, Health Services Management.

INTRODUCTION

The need for health services, including those related to nursing, to go through the management and audit process is a development that occurred over time and was influenced by a series of historical and contextual factors. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the rapid growth of cities, there was a greater concentration of population in urban areas. This has led to a growing demand for organized and effective health services to address the unsanitary living conditions and public health challenges associated with urbanization (Pizzinga *et. al.*, 2020).

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, nursing began to professionalize as a distinct discipline within the healthcare field. With this, the need arose for a more formalized and systematic management of nursing services, including the organization of teams, the allocation of resources and the supervision of clinical practices (Chiavenato, 2020).

Beginning in the 20th century, there has been an increasing focus on evidence-based medicine, which emphasizes the importance of using data and scientific research to guide clinical practices. This has also extended to nursing, leading to the need for auditing to ensure compliance with best practices and clinical guidelines. Health services have become increasingly complex, with technological advances, new treatments and interventions, and an aging population. This has increased the need for effective management to coordinate the different parts of the healthcare system and ensure the quality and safety of care provided (Nahas, 2024).

As healthcare systems developed, regulations and standards emerged to ensure the quality and safety of the services provided. This included the need for regular audits to assess compliance with these standards and identify areas for improvement. The need for health services, including nursing, to go through the management and audit process arose in response to social changes, advances in the health sector and the need to guarantee the quality and safety of care provided to patients (Lobato, 2023).

Auditing in the nursing area is a fundamental process that aims to guarantee the quality and efficiency of health services provided to patients. This field of administrative nursing activities has evolved over time, seeking to ensure that healthcare is provided in accordance with established standards and best clinical practices (Reis et. al., 2020).

Through the audit, nursing professionals can identify areas for improvement, ensure compliance with policies and procedures, in addition to optimizing resources and promoting patient safety. Evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of nursing services, including reviewing medical records, evaluating nursing practices, identifying problems and implementing solutions, thereby contributing to patient safety, resource optimization, regulatory compliance and continuous improvement of health services (Pires; Pires J., 2021).

It is important to highlight that, when we refer to the quality of services offered in a health care unit, nursing plays an administrative role essential to its maintenance. The professional nurse must meet the expectations and needs resulting from the demand for services, with the proposed purpose of serving the population assigned to their responsibilities (Dutra, 2021).

When it comes to nursing audits, this aims to monitor the clinical practices carried out within the units, reviewing them if they are in accordance with health protocols and procedures and works to identify areas for improvement. Through nursing audits, it is possible to identify quality problems in the care provided to patients. This may include medication errors, failures to document care, or noncompliance with clinical guidelines (Rezino, 2023).

By identifying areas for improvement, the nursing audit allows healthcare institutions to implement corrective measures and improve the quality of care. This may include reviewing policies and procedures, conducting additional training for staff, and implementing ongoing monitoring. An effective nursing audit can help reduce risks for patients and the healthcare institution, avoiding complications arising from care errors, which can result in reduced costs related to the treatment of preventable

complications (Coutinho et. al., 2023).

What are the effectiveness impacts observed in primary health care units (PHC), of control, evaluation, regulation and auditing when offering services and on the demand of the population attached to these units?

This work is justified by the opportunity to highlight how the planning of actions and offers of health services carried out within PHC achieve success through their organization, as well as monitoring the execution of health activities through nursing audits.

OBJECTIVE

Describe the experience within curricular practices with regard to the organization of services provided within a basic health unit.

METHODOLOGY

This is a report on a supervised internship experience, experienced by students in the seventh semester of the bachelor's degree in nursing at a private higher education institution, within a primary health care unit in the municipality of Crateús, during the period of April 2024.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

We can conceptualize auditing as the systematic, analytical, expert and formal evaluation of an activity by someone not directly involved in its execution, to determine whether this activity is being carried out in accordance with the proposed objectives. Chiavenato (2003), in turn, states that auditing is a review and control system, to inform management about the efficiency and effectiveness of programs under development, with the function of not only indicating failures and problems, but also point out suggestions and solutions, thus assuming an eminently educational character.

The Ministry of Health (BRAZIL, 2001, p. 9) works with the concept that the audit

consists of:

in the systematic and independent examination of facts obtained through observation, measurement, testing or other appropriate techniques, of an activity, element or system, to verify adequacy to the requirements recommended by current laws and regulations and determine whether health actions, and their results are in line with planned provisions.

Furthermore, the audit, according to Milles, cited by Staszczak (2001), involves people and records, generating a combination of data sources that is extremely pertinent to the field of quality. This combination distinguishes an audit from an inspection, which is the verification of the product, service or process being provided. Unlike auditing as an evaluation process based on evidence, for Milles, the word "verification" determines that conclusions are based on confirmed facts, and not on evidence. (Golasinski *et. al.*, 2023).

The Nursing audit, in turn, must be categorized as the critical and systematic analysis of the quality of Nursing care provided to patients, with the comparison of the care provided with the standards of care, together with the use of previously established resources and the impulse for changes to the current standard whenever necessary. In Nursing, the audit compares the care provided with the defined standards. Therefore, improving the quality of Nursing care has created a need to review and modify the practice and role of the Nursing professional in order to give a new characteristic to their performance (Araújo *et. al.*, 2020).

Audits used in nursing services include outcome, process and structure assessments. The result means a change in the patient's health parameters, attributed to the provision of some care within the unit, process audits reside in the search for the quality of all the practices offered, giving it the name of nursing process. The structure audit, in turn, monitors

the place and structure where patient care is provided (Coutinho, 2023).

Nursing auditing is supported by extensive legislation, which also covers its different areas of activity, subsidizing the various bodies, governmental and non-governmental, to make them capable of increasingly supporting the activities carried out by Nursing (Nahas, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The provision of services within a health unit is directly related to the way they are organized within it. It is important to highlight that the resources that make up the provider unit, whether material or human, are organized in such a way as to provide dynamic, systematic and, above all, efficient service, so that the objective is achieved.

In the service unit that is the subject of this report, the way in which services were organized and demand was made available to users was carefully observed. In terms of organizational tools, services were offered through the allocation of available places for consultation and/or other procedures, according to the availability of assistance professionals assigned to that unit. Demands were scheduled through manual capture, a waiting line outside the unit, where users waited to receive passwords to obtain a medical appointment. Therefore, it is worth highlighting that this procedure took place in the unit only when it came to consultations with a clinical medical professional, which represented more than half of the object of interest for users of the health unit.

The team, composed of 01 (one) medical professional, 02 (two) permanent nurses, 01 (one) regular nurse, 02 (two) dentists, 05 (five) nursing technicians and 08 (eight) technical and administrative support professionals, has two service managers who are responsible for planning the unit's health service offering, as

well as the number of vacancies offered within the unit. Monthly, they meet with the team of professionals in order to develop an offer plan for users attached to the unit.

It is important to highlight that the unit uses some planning tools, at a strategic and operational level. The unit has care protocols inserted within a national system, recently incorporated into the public health network, which assists in consultations and procedures carried out by the UBS, the citizen's electronic medical record (PEC).

The PEC of the e-SUS AB System is software from the e-SUS Primary Care Strategy used to operationalize SISAB (Health Information System for Primary Care). It is provided free of charge by the Ministry of Health, which has been committed to the technological evolution of the system. The PEC is considered a tool for improving the quality of care and a facilitator of work processes in Primary Care, including management processes. Supports professionals in coordinating care and supporting clinical decisions, representing an important advance in the qualification and use of information recorded in Primary Care.

Within the unit, the system is underutilized, or used ineffectively in the sense that it is used only as a tool for collecting and inserting data, leaving little to be desired in the use of its full capacity. The system, which could be used as an important management tool for the entire unit, in aspects such as prior appointment scheduling, issuing online prescriptions, telemedicine care and planning the provision of services in an automated manner, is used only as a system of consultations by medical and nursing professionals.

As it was already mentioned in this work, there are some aspects of the nursing audit that are essential in the planning of all health activities, among which the audit of the evaluation of processes carried out within the provision of services stands out. What was

observed is that the PEC could be used, for example, to schedule monthly appointments for patients seeking the service of the unit in question. However, the unit continues to force users to wait in long lines outside the care unit, at times under adverse weather conditions, in order to receive a service password and then go through an attendant, who collects personal information such as national health card (CNS) or individual registration (CPF), in a manual form, which later will have this same data inserted into the PEC system.

An electronic system prepared to meet demand is being used inefficiently, and this has to do with the way supply planning

within the unit is being carried out. When we talk about auditing results, or prospective auditing for example, the unit's conduct represents a setback, underutilizing a system that is equipped with all the tools necessary to manage the supply and demand of services.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The nursing audit has the appropriate tools to organize the healthcare process. With it, it is possible, at a strategic, tactical and operational level, to consolidate all available tools, in order to organize and execute health actions in any unit that offers them, providing quality results and effectiveness in the health service.

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