

Nurses' understanding of aseptic technique and the concepts of sterility and cleanliness is inadequate, a finding in line with results of previous studies" Gould et al (2017).

Abstract:

Background: In many countries, aseptic procedures are undertaken by nurses in the general ward setting, but variation in practice has been reported, and evidence indicates that the principles underpinning aseptic technique are not well understood.

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Methods: A survey was conducted, employing a brief, purpose-designed, self-reported questionnaire.

Results: The response rate was 72%. Of those responding, 65% of nurses described aseptic technique in terms of the procedure used to undertake it, and 46% understood the principles of asepsis. The related concepts of cleanliness and sterilization were frequently confused with one another. Additionally, 72% reported that they not had received training for at least 5 years; 92% were confident of their ability to apply aseptic technique; and 90% reported that they had not been reassessed since their initial training. Qualitative analysis confirmed a lack of clarity about the meaning of aseptic technique.

Conclusion: Nurses' understanding of aseptic technique and the concepts of sterility and cleanliness is inadequate, a finding in line with results of previous studies. This knowledge gap potentially places patients at risk. Nurses' understanding of the principles of asepsis could be improved. Further studies should establish the generalizability of the study findings. Possible improvements include renewed emphasis during initial nurse education, greater opportunity for updating knowledge and skills post-qualification, and audit of practice.

Reference:

Gould, D.J., Chudleigh, J., Purssell, E., Hawker, C., Gaze, S., James, D., Lynch, M., Pope, N. and



Drey, N. (2017) Survey to explore understanding of the principles of aseptic technique: Qualitative content analysis with descriptive analysis of confidence and training. American Journal of Infection Control. November 21st. .

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