

Nursing informatics fact sheet



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Nursing Informatics FACT Sheet Nursing Informatics What is Nursing

Informatics? Nursing informatics makes use of information and communication technology to integrate, process and manage all the nursing knowledge available in the support of the health of people all around the world (Marin, 2007).

Nursing informatics uses information technology as a tool to enhance prompt and efficient decision making and for better control and evaluation of nursing care (Marin, 2005).

Development of Nursing Informatics:

Processing of information is an integral part of nursing, as nurses are dependent on accurate and timely access to appropriate information for the efficient performance of all the activities required of the nursing profession, which include patient care, administration, consultation, education and training (Marin, 2005).

The relevant information required does not pertain only to technical knowledge, scientific development, quality control, clinical and administrative documentation, but also extends to the domains of human materials and resources and their availability for the delivery of the required nursing care (Marin, 2005).

Information technology began to be used for processing the vast amount of information as a part of nursing care. Nursing informatics evolved from a nice-to-have accessory to nursing to the current status of an essential part of the nursing profession (Simpson, 2007).

The two main catalysts in the development of nursing informatics have been the federal initiatives that have encouraged the use of electronic health records (EHRs) and the evidence that suggests clinical information systems

improve processes that lead to better patient outcomes (An emerging giant: Nursing informatics).

The Promise Held Out By Nursing Informatics:

Safety is expedited by nursing informatics through continuous monitoring, seamless transition at points of transition between care settings, when the probability of mistakes are at the highest and appropriate information-sharing in clinical decision making.

Effectiveness is achieved by nursing informatics allowing for dissemination of nursing standards or policies, permitting benchmarking for quality improvement.

Timeliness is enhanced through nursing informatics, making it possible to achieve “ just in time” interventions instead of “ just in case” interventions.

Efficiency is promoted by nursing informatics through removal of redundancies, like repeating the same questions or lab tests and making possible targeted interventions.

Nursing informatics addresses equity issues by facilitating access, like discharge information in the language of the patient and furthermore nursing informatics is blind to race, gender, age, economic status and physical appearance.

Nursing informatics allows for global connectedness, whereby nurse practitioners can tackle emergencies across vast distances (McBride, 2005).

Barriers to the Advancement of Nursing Informatics:

Advancement of nursing informatics requires financial outlays that compete with the more preferred areas of pharmacy, laboratory and imaging of the healthcare administrators.

The incompatibility of databases of institutions is a barrier to nursing

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informatics, and has virtually remained so because of the fear of legal repercussions or proprietary information falling into the hands of competitors.

Nurses consist of the largest group of information technology users within the healthcare sector, but seldom are part of the decision making process in the choice of information systems.

The fear of the nursing professionals that nursing informatics may lead to the nursing becoming a mere implementation of a set of standardized protocols and cause the profession becoming reductionistic (McBride, 2005).

Summary:

Information technology has transformed human development in many dramatic ways. Nursing informatics making use of information technology offers to lift nursing care of patients to levels not envisaged before.

Incorporating nursing informatics into healthcare is a challenge to the healthcare sector and the nursing professionals.

Literary References

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