

Nursing reflection



What is the difference between a comprehensive health assessment and a specific or risk assessment? Comprehensive health assessment is baseline for the nurse making a care plan and doctor diagnosing. It is analysing physiological, psychological, spiritual, socioeconomic, and cultural variables which can impact a person's functional health status (UTS handbook, 2012). Comprehensive assessment, is the collecting of data from an individual's information and monitoring the health status, this includes health history obtained via interview and physical examination (Lawrence, 2012). It describes the past and current health status of the patient which is compared with changes in future (Jarvis, 2012). Nurses can understand a patient's holistic health situation from this assessment.

Compared with comprehensive assessment, specific and risk assessment are more narrowly focused. Specific assessment is focusing on a particular problem or one body system (Jarvis, 2012). Nurses use this kind of assessment to collect data on a specific body function. Pain assessment is an example of specific assessment, it is assessing physical and psychosocial pain, treatment response and self-management, then deciding on non-pharmacological and pharmacological treatment (Jarvis, 2012). Specific assessment helps nurse understanding of the client's detailed health status in one particular area and for providing appropriate treatment.

Risk assessment is used to indicate the patient's risk of injury or disease. Statistics from the population group is matched to the individuals characteristics, and this is the base for an individual risk assessment (Stanley, 2012). Different assessments have different focus on health. Comprehensive assessment is getting health information of the client by

different specific assessments, it does not focus on a particular aspect.

Specific and risk assessment are not for every patient, different patients have different health situations.

Nurses will use specific assessment for patients based on their health status. For example, Mini Mental Examination does not need be done for all clients, as this examination is used for patients who might have cognitive dysfunction. Every specific and risk assessment have their own assessment tools to collect data systematically. A Risk assessment tool is used to assess a specific injury. For example, a nurse uses this tool to assess the safety risk of the patient who has a fall risk, and summarizes specific data of patient's past health history and physical examination (Laws & Hillman, 2012).

For instance, there are 3 assessment charts for pressure injury risk, Waterlow Pressure Ulcer risk assessment chart, the Norton scale for predicting risk of pressure ulcer or Braden risk assessment scale (Slater, 2012). Assessment tools help the nurse to recognize and monitor a patient's health situation by collecting data using these three assessment charts. By studying these assessments, I understand that a specific assessment is a significant element of the comprehensive assessment – we will not understand patient's health situation and provide care if we do not do specific patient assessment. When I assess patients, I will take their health history and do a physical examination, then continue to a specific and risk assessment.