

European Core Curriculum for a Basic Course in Nephrology Nursing

Clinical nephrology nursing practice manual (pre-registration level)

Target population:

Nursing students during their third or fourth year of study.

Prerequisites:

Completion of theoretical learning in nephrology nursing (learning and teaching in the classroom).

Main aims:

- obtaining clinical experience in assessing, planning and evaluating the outcomes of conservative and renal replacement therapies in acute and chronic renal failure
- understanding the special needs of these patients.

Objectives:

After completing the clinical practice experience, the student will be aware of:

- 1) The structure of the renal unit and the special equipment that is in use.
- 2) The variety of treatments that are provided in the renal unit.
- 3) The methods of practice and auditing that are in use in the nephrology department.
- 4) The role of the nephrology nurses within the multidisciplinary team.
- 5) The special needs of the renal patient population.
- 6) The process of coping and adaptation experienced by people suffering from end-stage renal failure and chronic disease.

It is recommended that the clinical experience time will be of at least five weeks duration (two weeks in haemodialysis; two weeks in peritoneal dialysis and one week in nephrology / pre-dialysis care)

Clinical practice in the haemodialysis (HD) unit

Students on placement here should be supervised by a mentor who has received training/education for this role. The learning process is based upon observation and interviewing skills. The students are not expected to care for patients independently.

Instruction from the mentor should include:

- 1) Understanding the principles of HD machines.
- 2) Evaluating the dialysate and dialysers needed for specific patients.
- 3) Overall pre-dialysis assessment :
 - Physical assessment
 - Blood pressure
 - Concept of "Dry weight"
 - Psychological needs
 - Laboratory data
- 4) Planning the HD treatment according to the patient's needs.
- 5) Assessment of the patient's vascular access for HD.
- 6) Observing the process of cannulation and connection to the HD machine.
- 7) Performing ongoing patient monitoring and surveillance during the dialysis session.
- 8) Understanding the required auditing methods used in the nephrology unit.
- 9) Recognising all the common complementary (medical, nutritional etc.) treatment given to the patient before, during and after the dialysis treatment.
- 10) Observing the process of disconnection from dialysis treatment.
- 11) Monitoring and evaluating dialysis treatment outcomes.
- 12) Assessing the patient's quality of life.
- 13) Considering rehabilitation factors in the patient's everyday activities

Clinical practice in the peritoneal dialysis (PD) unit

Instruction from the mentor should include:

- 1) Recognising the contraindications to PD (why PD may not be suitable for some patients)
- 2) Learning the different peritoneal access methods.
- 3) Understanding the principles of peritoneal dialysis.
- 4) Recognising the variety of PD methods (acute, IPD, CAPD, APD).
- 5) Assessing the PD method of choice to the patient's needs.
- 6) Understanding the PD patient education programme
- 7) Recognising the variety of PD solutions and their suitability to patient need.
- 8) Performing assessment of the patient's "dry weight", blood pressure, oedema, laboratory findings, and nutritional status.
- 9) Assessing the exit site and tunnel for signs of infection.
- 10) Assessing the drained fluids for signs of infection, bleeding or any other complication.
- 11) Learning the differential diagnosis of peritonitis or any other complications.

- 12) Learning the unit protocol for treating peritonitis.
- 13) Evaluating treatment outcomes.
- 14) Assessing the patient's quality of life.
- 15) Considering rehabilitation factors in the patient's everyday activities.

Clinical practice in the pre-dialysis clinic

Instruction from the mentor should include:

- 1) Recognising the pre-dialysis patient population and method of referral.
- 2) Assessing the special needs, problems and support systems of the patients and their significant others.
- 3) Assessing clinical and laboratory data in the pre-dialysis stage.
- 4) Being involved in the decision when to initiate renal replacement therapy.
- 5) Being involved in the process of guiding the patient and family to choose the suitable renal replacement therapy.

Evaluation of learning

Students should be encouraged to formulate a learning plan (clinical objectives) whilst on placement in the renal unit. It is recommended that they should meet with their named mentor at the beginning and end of their placement to discuss the learning plan and to reflect on their performance.