

NURSING CARE FOR STOMA PATIENTS

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Abstract

Nurses are an important part of the multidisciplinary team that treats patients with colostomy, helping to get proper care and avoid developing peristomal complications. The purpose of the article is to examine nursing care for stoma patients. In May and June of 2023, a self-structured survey was used to gather the data. After permission, interviews were conducted with twelve nurses who provided stomatized patient care in the Xhaferr Kongoli Regional Hospital's Surgery Department. The survey contained questions about the level of their skills and experience working with these patients. Statistical analysis was performed through the analysis of the data collected. Seventy -five percent of the respondents were female and fifteen percent male, with an average age of 42.4 years (S. D = 6.4) and working experience with patients with approximately 10 years (S. d = 5.8). Based on their responses, eighty -three percent of the nurses who were interviewed knew the proper procedures for managing colostomy patients. A planned ostomy care plan was followed by fifty -nine percent of them. Sixty -six percent of the nurses were able to timely identify colostomy complications and intervene without the need to remove the stoma from the patient. Regarding the training courses for the nursing care of patients with ostomy, only seven had developed several training courses on the subject. Providing adequate care for these persons requires a specialized and advanced qualification. To provide care for patients with stoma and to avoid problems, nurses must continue and update their education and training.

Keywords: care, infectious process, nurse, patient, stomach.

1. Introduction

The term "stomy" comes from ancient Greek and means "mouth". In medical terms, a stoma refers to a surgically created opening of an organ on the body's surface to allow the removal of waste products within that organ when it is damaged and unable to perform its function (Ambe ET AL., 2018). The most common stomas are the colostomy and ileostomy for the elimination of fecal waste and the urostomy for the elimination of urine. Among the main factors that may make a patient a candidate for a stoma are inflammatory bowel disease and colorectal cancer (Recalla et al., 2013). A pouch is attached to the patient's abdomen which will serve as a collection point for the extracted materials. The bags used can be closed or open and care should be taken when changing them, as it may contaminate the surrounding area causing peristomal complications (Smith & Samways, 2020).

Colostomies may be temporary or permanent. Temporary colostomies are stomas that are removed after the patient's condition improves and intestinal function is restored (Garber et al., 2002). Permanent ones are advised and placed when a part of the intestine has been resected when colorectal cancer has advanced or the sphincter of the anus is damaged and cannot be repaired (Perry & Connaughton, 2007). Although it is a life-saving procedure, both its placement and removal show increased rates of complications and mortality (Marin et al, 2005). Complications may be related to the colostomy itself or overlapping factors (Marin et al, 2005).

According to the literature, a ratio of 3% to 82% of ostomy patients experience early complications⁷, and 6% to 76% show late complications (Maglio et al., 2021; Leong et al., 1994). The most frequent stomal complications are observed in patients who are forced to place the stoma without planning, in an emergency, as their condition does not allow for a planning of the intervention. These patients may have stoma prolapse, hernia, granuloma, stomal retraction, or peristomal skin damage (Hsu et al., 2020).

Due to functional and physical modifications, patients need increased health care to identify potential stomal complications in time. The key to managing a stoma-related complication is to prevent it. Wound and ostomy nurses contribute to patient care by identifying and preventing complications early without the need to remove the stoma (Ayik et al., 2020).

In recent years, new responsibilities have been added to the role and image of the nurse. Such initiatives have been developed to assist the needs of health care, patients, and professional regulation/licensing. Many of these roles are new to nurses and require advanced knowledge and training (Chaney et al., 2007). Nurses should play a key role in all care pathways of ostomy patients to help them adapt to new physical and psychological conditions from pre-operative phases to full recovery (Panattoni et al., 2023).

2. Aim of Study

This article aims to investigate the nursing management of stoma patients, highlight their impact on reducing infectious risk, and help nurses understand the needs of these patients.

3. Methods

This cross-sectional study was conducted with nurses from the surgery department of Elbasan Regional Hospital "Xhaferr Kongoli" who take care of ostomy patients. Data collection was carried out during the months of May-June 2023. The tool used was designed based on a literature review of similar studies.

Instrument

The survey was divided into two sessions. The first part contains demographic data, general questions about the nurses' age, gender, training, experience with colostomy patients, and any training they may have had on this topic. In the second part, some questions investigate the level of skills and experience of nurses with patients with colostomy (Table 1). The survey was given to each nurse, explaining the purpose of the study, and was completed by the nurses after obtaining their consent. Complementary theoretical-scientific material has been developed from similar works published on Google Scholar, PubMed/Medline, etc., in recent years.

Data analysis

The collected data will be interpreted through data analysis and imported into Microsoft Excel directly from the completed questionnaires. Descriptive analysis will provide information about the sample and the variables used (mode, mean, standard deviation, maximum and minimum).

Table 1: The instrument

Thematic area	Questions
1. Demographic data	Gender
	Age

	Educational level/ Professional title
	Experience working with ostomy patients
	Training course related to 'Stoma-care'.
2.Stoma-care nursing skills	How do you plan nursing care in the ostomy patient?
	Do you operate according to a pre-prepared plan for the ostomy patients?
	Can you identify stomal complications in time?
	How do you prevent emerging peristomal infections in patients?
	What interventions do you apply to prevent peristomal skin infections?

4. Results

4.1. *Results derived from demographic data (Table 2):* After approval, 12 nurses, who work in the surgery department of the Regional Hospital 'Xhaferr Kongoli' in Elbasan and care for stoma patients, were interviewed regarding their level of skills and experience. From the responses received it emerged that nine nurses were women and 3 were men, with an average age of approximately 42.4 years and a standard deviation of 6.4. Seven of the participants (58.4%) had a master's degree in nursing, four participants (33.3%) had a bachelor's degree in general nursing, and one of the nurses (8.3%) had a professional master's degree. From the responses received, it appeared that the nurses interviewed had approximately ten years of experience working with stomatitis patients. 58.4% of the participants, or seven of them, had received training related to stoma care.

Table 2: Demographic data
Demographic data

Gender, n, %	9 female, 3 male	75% female and 15% male
Age, mean, SD	42.4 years	SD=6.4
Education level, n, %	Four participants- Bachelor's degree	33%
	Seven- Master's degree	58.4%
	One-Professional master's degree.	8.3%
Years of experience with stoma patients, mean, SD	Approximately 10 years	SD=5.8

Are you trained in ostomy care?	Yes-7 participant	58.4%
n, %	No- Five	41.6%

4.2. *Nursing skills of ostomy care:* The questions addressed in this session focused on the level of nurses' skills and their experience with stoma patients to identify infectious factors and reduce the number of complications in these patients, thus favoring their faster recovery. After analyzing the answers received, it was found that 83% of participating nurses, ten nurses, acted to provide care to these patients based on protocols to achieve the most effective management. 9% act according to the instructions of the relevant doctor, and 8% act according to the patient's condition (Figure 1 – Nursing care).

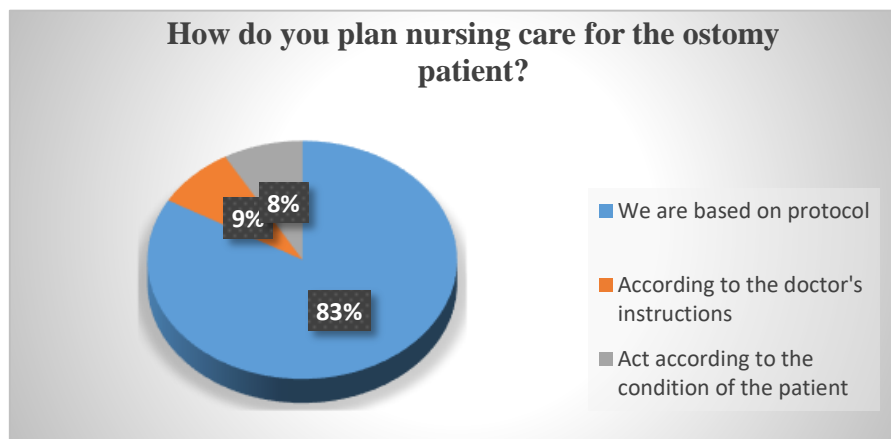


Figure 1. Nursing care

Seven of the participants (58%) answered that they followed a pre-prepared plan for the stoma patients and 5 of them (42%) did not follow a pre-prepared plan (Figure 2- Care planning).

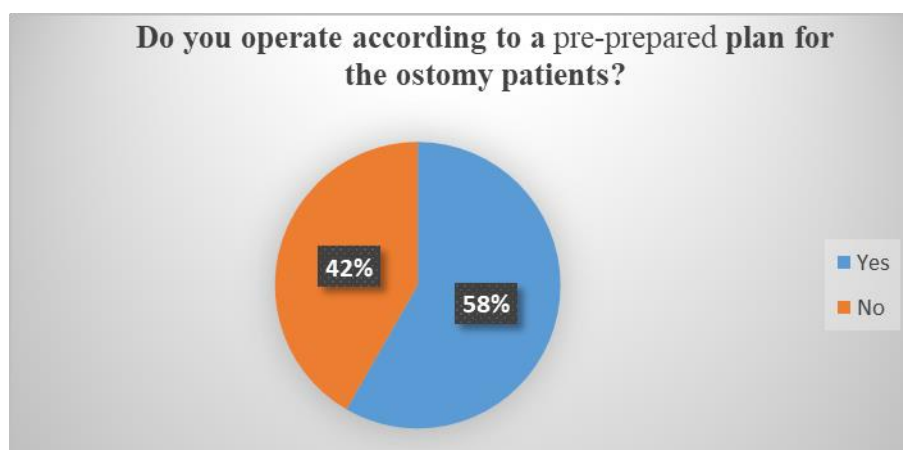


Figure 2. Care planning

Regarding the timely identification of stomal complications, the responses of the participants were: Eight nurses (67%), were able to identify the stomal complications in time and intervene without having to remove the stoma from the patient. Three nurses (25%) intervene in time, but sometimes the initial signs of infection can appear. While one nurse (8%) responded that he tries to identify infectious complications in time, but often encounters them (Figure 3- Identification of stomal complications).

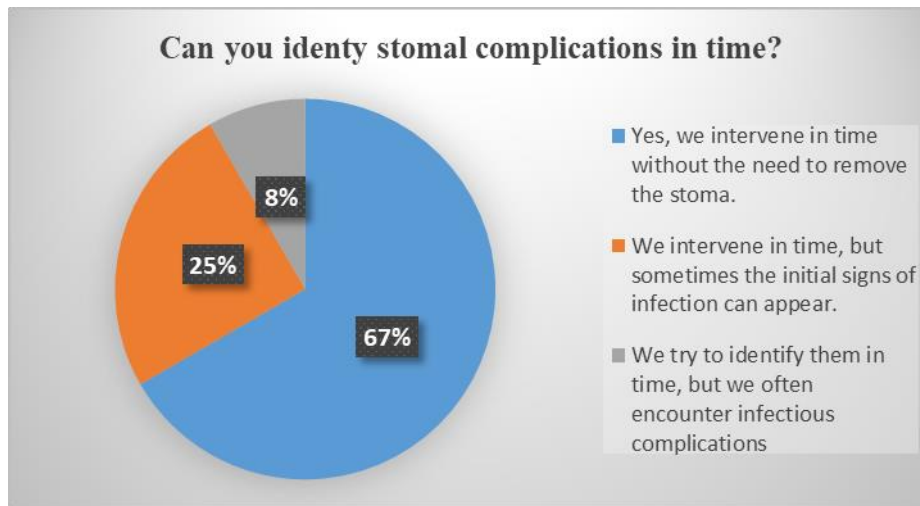


Figure 3. Identification of stomal complications

Five participants (42%) stated that their main goal in the prevention of peristomal infections was to reduce infectious processes, affecting the reduction of infectious cases. Four nurses, (33) stated that they try to treat the infected peristomal skin, to improve the condition. While three of them, (25%) only intervened by cleaning the infected area, removing the causative agent (Figure 4 - prevention of peristomal infections in patients).

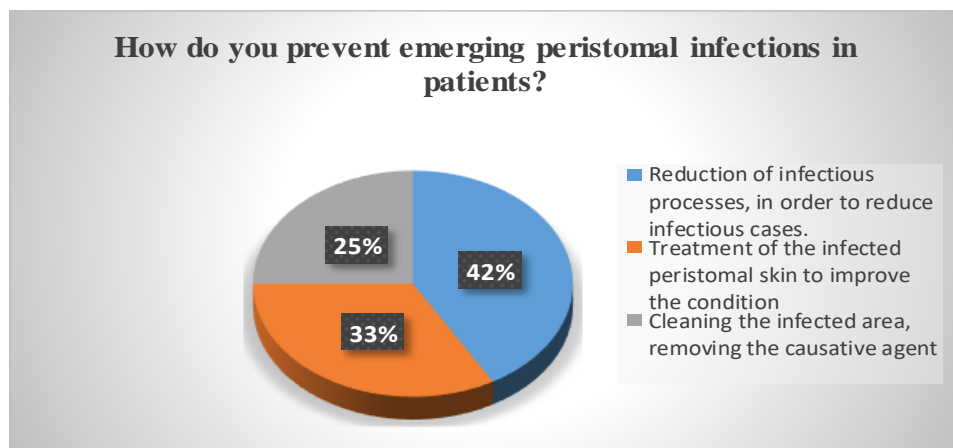


Figure 4. Prevention of peristomal infections in patients

Five participants (41.5%) emphasized the role of hand hygiene before medication or touching the stomal area. Two of them (17%) highlighted the need for peristomal skin hygiene. Another five (41.5%) stated that their main focus was on achieving patients' autonomy during stoma care (Figure 5- Interventions applied to prevent peristomal skin infections).

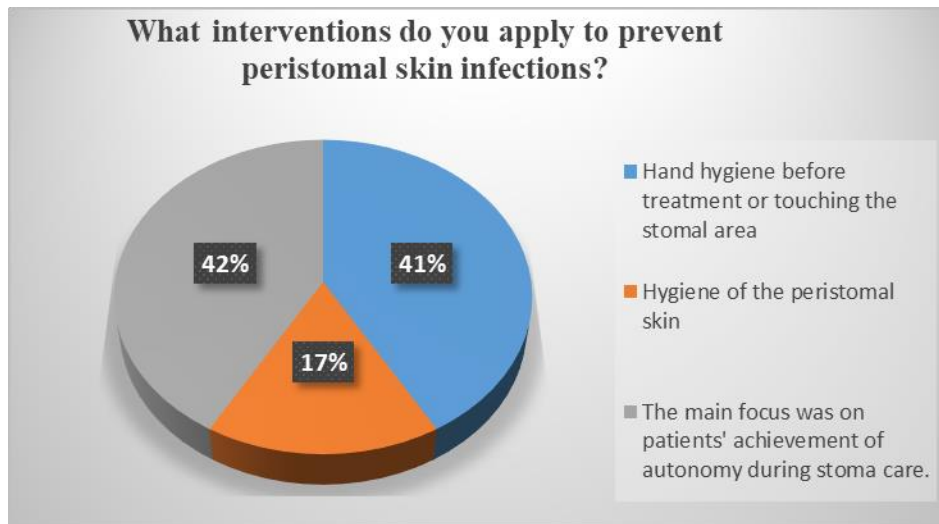


Figure 5. Interventions applied to prevent peristomal skin infections

Regarding the education of patients or their caregivers, on the management of ostomies, all participants expressed themselves positively, evaluating this aspect as very important. Educating patients on how to properly manage and maintain the peristomal area will increase their independence.

5. Conclusions

Management of an ostomy patient requires the collaboration of the entire multidisciplinary staff. Providing care to these patients requires advanced skills. From the interpretation of the results obtained in this article, the importance of the nurse's role in the management and planning of healthcare for ostomy patients is suggested. An essential and necessary aspect that is highlighted is the continuous training of all nursing staff to improve knowledge and recognize new techniques. To guarantee patient safety and minimize infectious risks, a care, diagnostic and therapeutic program is necessary, during which the stoma and surrounding skin are checked.

The importance of the figure of the specialist nurse for the treatment of ostomies through training and courses emerges from the literature. It is good practice for general nurses to have a basic understanding of ostomies, as they can identify complications or problems with medications and know when to refer a patient to an ostomy nurse specialist. Additionally, the inclusion of recommendations for future research or nursing practices in ostomy patients would be beneficial.

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