Policy and advocacy for improving population health: Nurses’ position in telehealth

Name

Institution

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**Article 1.**

Bashir, A. & Bastola, D. (2018). Perspectives of nurses towards telehealth efficacy and quality of health care: pilot study. *JMIR Medical Informatics*, 6(2), e35. DOI: 10.2196/medinform.9080. Retrieved from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5993972/

This is a journal article that discusses nurses’ opinions regarding the efficacy of telehealth, and implications for quality of care. It notes that telehealth nursing leverages communication technologies to deliver health care. Although telehealth makes nursing care more readily available, there are care quality concerns. To determine if this is a legitimate concern, the study used SERVQUAL interviews to survey nurses with a focus on empirically testing and validating telehealth nursing as a health care delivery model. The results of the study indicated overall satisfaction with the quality and level of service, noting that it was above expectations. The study concluded that telehealth nursing is a useful and convenient tool for daily monitoring of the patients’ health. In addition, it offers opportunities for immediate communication feedback from health care stakeholders (such as caregivers, family and patients) with scheduling conveniences. Although the study contacted a small sample size (13 participants) that was restricted to a single geographical location (two limitations), the results presented in the article offer evidence that telehealth nursing is a valid health care tool that leverages communication technologies to eliminate the conveniences of scheduling, time and distance in communications between nurses and other stakeholders.

**Article 2.**

Fathi, J. T., Modin, H. E. & Scott, J. D. (2017). Nurses advancing telehealth services in the era of health reform. *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 22(2), Manuscript 2. DOI: 10.3912/OJIN.Vol22No02Man02. Retrieved from http://ojin.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMarketplace/ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Vol-22-2017/No2-May-2017/Nurses-Advancing-Telehealth-Services.html

This is a journal article that explores the position that nurses can play in the current era of health care reforms. It notes that as care priorities shift and nurses are pressured to deliver high quality care, they are forced to explore tools that can facilitate their efforts. It specifically notes that the health care environment has experienced a surging need for greater efficiency alongside advances in ICT. Given these set of conditions, the authors propose that nurses are best positioned (now than any other time) to lead the charge in delivering telehealth as an innovative care approach. This is in response to the changing national demographics and geographic population dispersions that place an unrealistic demand on health care resources, and presented opportunities for telehealth technologies. This is more apparent for rural communities that have limited access to essential health care services. The authors note that telehealth can be delivered in different modalities to include synchronous telehealth, ehealth, asynchronous telehealth, remote telemonitoring, and econsults. In addition, it notes that telehealth delivers high quality care that is describes as effective, efficiency, safe, timely, patient-centered, and equitable. Still, the article draws attention to policy considerations for telehealth application to include demand for providers, nurses’ role and contribution, delivery and reimbursement challenges and feasibility, and future considerations. The authors conclude that telehealth has the potential for increasing access to primary and specialty nursing care, while ensuring that high quality health care is delivered at lower costs. Based on the literature it is clear that nurses can play a critical role in telehealth delivery through acting as champions, and undertaking advocacy tasks, thereby closing the gaps in health care delivery and reducing health disparities.

**Article 3.**

Neville, C. W. (2018). Telehealth: a balancing look at incorporating this technology into practice. *SAGE Open Nursing*, 4. DOI: 10.1177/2377960818786504. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2377960818786504

This is a journal article that objectively explores the position that telehealth can play in improving health care access and quality through leveraging interactive technologies and communication tools. It notes that although telehealth has not reached the maturity phase of its adoption, it is undeniable that it is only a matter of time before that happens since its use is growing exponentially with many medical specialties leveraging this care approach to reach a larger population of patients. It specifically mentions that telehealth has been adapted in teleradiology, telesurgery, teleconsultations, remote patient monitoring, and remote retinal imaging. It also mentions that telehealth adoption is anticipated to expand owing to advantages that it offers to include reducing costs, improving access to medical services and personnel, and improving care outcomes. Still, telehealth adoption is limited by legal and ethical issues, licensure and standards, initial cost concerns, and fear of dehumanizing health care. Although these are legitimate concern, in no way will they indefinitely hinder efforts to facilitate telehealth adoption. Besides that, advancing ICT technologies, medical personnel shortages, government grant and insurance reimbursement opportunities, and government acknowledgement are indicators that telehealth adoption is gathering momentum. The implication is that nurses should support telehealth as a tool for improving health care access and quality.

**Article 4.**

Balestra, M. (2017). Telehealth and legal implications for nurse practitioners. *The Journal of Nurse Practitioners,* 14(1), 33-39. DOI: 10.1016/j.nurpra.2017.10.003. Retrieced from https://www.npjournal.org/article/S1555-4155(17)30808-5/fulltext

This is a journal article that identifies the legal issues that nurses must explore even as they adopt telehealth in their practices. It notes that telehealth is a rapidly growing trend within the health care industry, and although it is still a relatively new concept, it will soon be part of standard practice. It mentions that the benefits of telehealth that motivate stakeholders to support its adoption include better care outcomes, cost savings, and improved patient access to care. In addition, it notes that nurses can leverage telehealth in their practice to improve health care delivery to underserved patient populations, such as patients in rural areas. Still, application of telehealth by nurses is noted to be limited by wide variations in practice guidelines, regulations and rules surrounding telehealth, which have implications for care outcomes, licensing and credentialing, reimbursement, fraud and abuse, patient privacy, and malpractice litigation. Nurses are encouraged to minimize the noted limitations through implementing practical advice and risk management practices that include identifying and meeting licensing requirements, complying with relevant legislation, basic training on telehealth use, secure patient consent, educate patients, review cultural competence, document use, prepare contingency plan, consult guidelines, implement review process, have awareness of reimbursement requirements, and acquire malpractice and disciplinary insurance policy. This article calls attention to the fact that telehealth is a growing trend that nurses are increasingly expected to adopt, and that they should protect their careers even as they go about the adoption process.

**Article 5.**

Kleinpell, R., Barden, C., Rincon, T., McCarthy, M. & Zapatochny, R. (2016). Assessing the impact of telemedicine on nursing care in intensive care units. *American Journal of Critical Care*, 25(1), e14-e20. DOI: 10.4037/ajcc2016808. Retrieved from http://ajcc.aacnjournals.org/content/25/1/e14.full

This is a journal article that explores the impact of telehealth in nursing care delivery and outcomes in the intensive care units. It notes that as a relatively new care approach that has yet to be fully endorsed by the medical industry, information on the impact of telehealth is alarmingly limited. Applying a primary research approach that subjected selected nurses working in the intensive care unit to surveys, the article noted that telehealth improves the speed of nursing care, collaboration, job performance and communication. In addition, it is useful in nursing assessments (to note vital signs trends, detect unstable physiological status and enhance safety) and improves care through better time management. The article concludes that telehealth delivery in the intensive care unit can be improved through focusing on developing competencies and matching guidelines to concepts. The results of this article endorse the use of telehealth among nurses, and provide a roadmap for improved adoption in nursing care.