

# Relationship Between Certification Status of Nurses and Patient Outcomes in the Intensive Care Unit (2015)

## Division of Critical Care

Vanessa B. Cainap, RN; Kris P. Camacho, RN; Richard S. Dizon, RN

**Background of the Study:** Certification and competence of nurses are related to quality patient outcomes and satisfaction. Intensive Care Unit (ICU) certification has perceived intrinsic value, empowerment and heightened collaboration with the healthcare team when dealing with patients' safety. The level of knowledge and judgment appear to play a crucial role in the prevention, mitigation, and creation of adverse events in the clinical setting.

**Objective:** To explore the link between nurses' competence in the Intensive Care Unit, as measured by certification status, and patients' outcomes.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional, analytic study design was used to determine the association of nurse certification status to patient outcomes. Data on the prevalence of adverse events were documented in all ICUs of the Philippine Heart center and were analyzed and correlated with Department of Health (DOH)-certified ICU nurses. Homogeneity of ICUs was subjected to ANOVA while correlation between percentage of certified nurses and patient outcomes for each unit was determined through Pearson's product-moment correlation.

**Results:** Findings of this study provided an understanding of the relationships between competence and certification of ICU nurses ( $n=157$ ) and safety of patients. Total adverse events (Pearson's  $r=-0.01$ ) include pressure ulcer, medication error, fall, unplanned extubation, and Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infection (CAUTI) which revealed no significant correlation ( $p$ -value 0.99) with total DOH certified nurses (67%). Certification of registered nurses is associated with expertise in a specialized area of practice. Whether or not the percentage of registered nurses provides an additive effect in combination with nurse staffing, nurse education, and healthy work environments, delivering safe and high-quality care depends heavily on investment in nursing certification and alignment of the nursing certification process.