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## ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PRIMARY NURSING

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### Annotation

Primary nursing is a model of care in which a registered nurse (RN) is responsible for managing and coordinating the care of a group of patients throughout their entire hospital stay. This includes assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating the care plan for each patient. The primary nurse is the main point of contact for patients and their families, and they work collaboratively with other healthcare providers to ensure that patients receive high-quality, individualized care.

**Keywords:** healthcare, patients, nurse, contact, model, responsibility.

Developed in the 1970s as a result of the increased acuity (severity of illness) of hospitalized patients, primary nursing was designed to promote the concept of an identified nurse for every patient during the patient's stay on a particular unit. The goal of primary nursing is to deliver consistent, comprehensive care by identifying one nurse who is responsible, has authority, and is accountable for the patient's nursing care outcomes for the period during which the patient is in a unit.

In primary nursing, each newly admitted patient is assigned to a primary nurse. Primary nurses assess their patients, plan their care, and write the plan of care. While on duty, they care for their patients and delegate responsibility to associate nurses when they are off duty. Associate nurses may be other RNs or LPNs/LVNs.

Patients are divided among primary nurses in such a manner that each nurse is responsible for the care of a group of patients 24 hours a day. Unless there is a compelling reason to transfer a patient, the primary nurse cares for the patient in the unit from the time of admission to the time of discharge. The primary nurse may be assisted by other care providers (such as other nurses, aides, and technicians) but retains accountability, or responsibility, for care outcomes 24 hours a day while the patient is in the unit. The primary nurse communicates effectively with associate



nurses caring for the patient on other shifts and with primary nurses in other units if the patient is transferred (e.g., to the operating room or intensive care unit). A nurse caring for an infant in the neonatal intensive care unit, where the complex care and the prolonged hospital stays of their tiny patients is amenable to primary nursing. Primary nursing is used in a variety of settings and is often modified from its original form.

Primary Nursing Advantages and Disadvantages:

Advantages:

High patient and family satisfaction

Promotes RN responsibility, authority, autonomy, and accountability

Nurse can care for entire patient—physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually

Patient knows nurse well, and nurse knows patient well

Promotes patient-centered decision making

Increases coordination and continuity of care

Promotes professionalism

Promotes job satisfaction and sense of accomplishment for nurse

Disadvantages:

Difficult to hire all RN staff

Expensive to pay all RN staff

Nurses are not familiar with other patients, making it difficult to “cover” for one another

May create conflicts between primary and associate nurses

Stress of around-the-clock responsibility

Heavy responsibility, especially for new nurses

All in all, there are clear advantages and disadvantages. The decision of which model to use depends on various factors, including the patient population, the healthcare setting, and the available resources.

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