A narrative review and synthesis of the literature on registered nurses communication between shifts.

Kitson A, Muntlin Athlin A, Elliott J and Cant M
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Kitson A, Muntlin Athlin A, Elliott J and Cant M
• Background
• Handover and context
• Narrative review and synthesis
• Seminal papers
• Empirical papers
• Findings
• Recommendations
Background

• Collaborative project
  – University & Tertiary Hospital
• A peripheral issue identified
• Communication leading to safe and high quality patient-centred care

• Handover......
Handover

- Describes the end of shift handover of patient care between outgoing and oncoming nursing staff
- Verbal
- Written
- Pre-recorded
Handover and the drivers

• Policy and practice agenda

• Top patient safety priority and need for standardised handover procedures highlighted
  – Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2007)
  – Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2011)
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Aim

To describe, appraise and synthesise the seminal and empirical literature around registered nurses’ communication behaviours between shifts in acute hospital settings.
The literature review

Meta-narrative review intended design
Literature scoping search

Narrative review exclusively of the nursing literature
Components of the meta narrative review utilised
Narrative review

• Search method – timeline 1970 –April 2012  
  – PubMed, CINAHL and Scopus and secondary search of the identified texts reference lists
• Search terms  
• Search outcome  
  – N=107
• Full text review – inclusion/ exclusion criteria  
  – N=90
• Quality appraisal  
  – N=59
• Data abstraction  
  – N=29
• Synthesis  
  – Seminal N=5; Empirical N=24
Imagine

- Picture a shift to shift handover
- Who delivered the handover?
- What was said during handover?
- Where did it take place?
- Who received this information?
- What was the desired effect?

- And one last question – what was the direction of the information flow?
1. **Overall purpose/ primary function** (Lelean, 1973; Parker et al, 1992; Thurgood, 1995; Miller, 1998; Lally, 1999)


3. **Seeing the whole picture** (Lelean, 1973; Parker et al; Lally, 1999)

4. **Teaching and education** (Lelean, 1973; Parker et al, 1992; Thurgood, 1995; Lally, 1999)

5. **Language** (Lelean, 1973; Parker et al, 1992; Thurgood, 1995; Miller, 1998; Lally, 1999)

6. **Patient-centred care** (Lelean, 1973; Parker et al; Lally, 1999)

7. **Social cohesion** (Parker et al, 1992; Thurgood, 1995; Miller, 1998; Lally, 1999)
Narrative review of empirical papers
Timeline 1998- 2012

• 24 papers analysed
• No new themes
• Confirmation of themes identified in the seminal works

• Use of a metaphor to understand the broader context of handover processes
The clinical care setting as the stage
A stage play as the metaphor


The Plot (overall purpose or primary function)

- Identified in 12 out of the 24 papers from 2000 onwards.
- Continuity of care and quality of care
- Continuity of care and patient safety focus
- Unclear content and purpose of handover
- Unthinking nature of handovers
- Handover as a two way process
The Actors (*Report givers and receivers*)

- Identified in 2 papers in 2009 and 2012.
- Giver/ receiver of the handover not stated in 9 papers
- Arguing for a two-way communication process
- Differing expectations of incoming and outgoing nurses’ expectations
Setting the Stage *(Seeing the whole picture)*

- Identified in 4 out of the 24 papers 2000-2012
- A global assessment of ‘fine indicated the amount of nursing care required for the next picture
- Unclear who sees the complete picture in the ward or unit
- Descriptions of the ‘group’ handover and the individual handover
Rehearsals (*Teaching and education*)

- Identified in 3 out of the 24 papers
- Contradictory description of education benefits in the bedside handover
The script (*Language*)

- Identified in 18 out of 24 papers 1998-2012
- Limitations of handover
- An arising discussion relating to the importance of technical tools such as written sheets, checklists and other tools to assist with handover
- Identification of facilitators to effective handovers
Audience participation (*patient-centred care*)

- Identified in 9 out of 24 papers
- Bedside handover is introduced
- The involvement of patients is dependent on their physical condition, their medical knowledge and the nurses' capacity to encourage the patients' participation of providing the invitations to participate
The performance *(Social cohesions)*

- Identified in 8 papers out of 24
- Identified as that team building, enculturation, debriefing are all important and create a social cohesiveness
- A relationship between positive working relationships and effective handovers is perceived
- The limiting effect of bedside handover on professional socialisation
- Dissatisfaction with handovers is related to poor support from colleagues
- Handover – ‘the dance’ ‘the facts’ ‘Professional Nursing Practice’ ‘Alleviating the load’
The care setting as the stage

- Who is directing this drama?
- What about the actors/ cast?
- What is the rehearsal for and what performance is expected?
- Will there be audience participation?
The recommendations – research

- The explicit use of communication theory to explain between shift communication
- What is the role of the unit lead in setting effective communication standards?
- What is the role of the unit lead and individual nurses in determining how nurses talk about patients?
- What information does the whole floor need for the shift?
- What information do incoming RN’s need about the ‘business’/ risk potential and detail of their allocated patients?
- What information do nurses and patients need to share, and how is this best facilitated?
- How can structured checklists and technologies be used to improve the effective of nursing communication behaviours
- How does local context influence communication behaviours
- How can patients and carers be actively engaged this research agenda?
Limitations

• English language only.
• Quality of the research
• Lack of theoretical underpinning of the research
• Lack of consistency in terminology
• Focus on instrumental and practical solutions rather than focussing on the deeper communication issues.
• Nursing related research only
REVIEW PAPER

What’s my line? A narrative review and synthesis of the literature on Registered Nurses’ communication behaviours between shifts

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References


