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# Quality Management in Hospitals: Evidence on Instruments Used to Improve the Quality of Care Records

*Gestão da Qualidade em Hospitais: Evidências Sobre Instrumentos Utilizados na Qualificação dos Registros Assistenciais*

*Gestión de la Calidad en Hospitales: Evidencias Sobre Instrumentos Utilizados en la Calificación de los Registros Asistenciales*

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**Abstract:** Introduction: The nursing process aims to collect and generate information about patients so that health care can be provided in a way that meets the identified needs with quality. Nursing records document the nursing process so that interventions can be safely established, planned, evaluated, and implemented. General objective: To identify, through an integrative literature review, which instruments have been applied to improve the quality of nursing records and how they are used in the professional team's daily routine. Method: This is an integrative literature review consisting of six stages: guiding question, sampling, data collection, critical appraisal of the included studies, discussion, and presentation. Articles published in Portuguese, English, or Spanish in the last five years and studies conducted in public hospitals will be included. Review articles will be excluded. Results: Health instruments contribute to the care provided to patients; however, the quality with which these instruments are completed by the nursing team determines the extent of that contribution. Conclusion: Hospitals should invest in continuing education for nursing teams in order to contribute to patient care, since the correct and appropriate completion of these instruments reduces risks and costs and improves patients' health care quality.

**Keywords:** Nursing records. Audit. Nursing process. Service quality.

**Resumo:** Introdução: O processo de enfermagem tem como objetivo levantar e gerar informações acerca do paciente para que então seja fornecida uma assistência em saúde de modo a atender as necessidades identificadas com qualidade. O registro de enfermagem documenta o processo de enfermagem para que as intervenções sejam estabelecidas, planejadas, avaliadas e implementadas com segurança. Objetivo geral: Levantar através de uma revisão integrativa de literatura quais instrumentos têm sido aplicados na qualificação do registro de enfermagem e suas aplicações no dia a dia da equipe profissional. Método: Trata-se de uma revisão integrativa de literatura, constituída por seis etapas: pergunta norteadora, amostragem, coleta de dados, avaliação crítica dos estudos incluídos, discussão e apresentação. Serão incluídos na pesquisa artigos publicados em português, inglês ou espanhol, nos últimos 5 anos e pesquisas realizadas em hospitais públicos. Serão excluídos da pesquisa os artigos de revisão. Resultados: os instrumentos em saúde contribuem para a assistência prestada ao paciente, no entanto, o que vai ditar essa contribuição é a qualidade com a qual os instrumentos são preenchidos pela equipe profissional de enfermagem. Conclusão: Cabe aos hospitais investirem em educação permanente para as equipes de enfermagem, visando contribuir para assistência ao paciente, visto que o preenchimento correto e adequado desses instrumentos diminuem os riscos, gastos e aumentam a qualidade de saúde dos pacientes.

**Palavras-chave:** Registro de enfermagem. Auditoria. Processo de enfermagem. Qualidade do serviço.

**Resumen:** Introducción: El proceso de enfermería tiene como objetivo recopilar y generar información sobre el paciente para que se proporcione una atención sanitaria capaz de satisfacer con calidad las necesidades identificadas. El registro de enfermería documenta el proceso de enfermería para que las intervenciones se establezcan, planifiquen, evalúen e implementen de forma segura. Objetivo general: Identificar, mediante una revisión integradora de la literatura, qué instrumentos se han aplicado para mejorar la calidad del registro de enfermería y sus aplicaciones en el día a día del equipo profesional. Método: Se trata de una revisión integradora de la literatura, constituida por seis etapas: pregunta orientadora, muestreo, recolección de datos, evaluación crítica de los estudios incluidos, discusión y presentación. Se incluirán artículos publicados en portugués, inglés o español en los últimos cinco años e investigaciones realizadas en hospitales públicos. Se excluirán los artículos de revisión. Resultados: Los instrumentos sanitarios contribuyen a la atención prestada al paciente; sin embargo, la calidad con la que el equipo profesional de enfermería cumplimenta estos instrumentos determina dicha contribución. Conclusión: Los hospitales deben invertir en educación permanente para los equipos de enfermería con el fin de contribuir a la atención del paciente, ya que la cumplimentación correcta y adecuada de estos instrumentos reduce los riesgos y los gastos y aumenta la calidad de la salud de los pacientes.

**Palabras clave:** Registro de enfermería. Auditoría. Proceso de enfermería. Calidad del servicio.

## 1. Introduction

The nursing process aims to collect and generate information about patients so that health care can be provided in a way that meets the identified needs with quality. Nursing records document the nursing process so that interventions can be safely established, planned, evaluated, and implemented. According to COFEN Resolution No. 429/2012, nursing professionals are responsible for recording in the patient's medical record and in other documents, whether physical or electronic, information about the care process and the organization of work processes required to ensure continuity and quality of client care (BRASIL, 2012; CARDOSO, 2017; SILVA, 2019).

The quality of health care incorporates new assessment perspectives aimed at improving the process that should be present in the different ways of producing and providing services. Mindful of the need to serve patients efficiently, institutions regularly conduct audits. Since nursing records are a form of written communication among the professional team, seeking to organize and provide continuity to planning through the description of procedures performed by nursing professionals, hospital auditing plays a considerable role by identifying vulnerabilities and deficiencies in these records. Thus, a relationship can be observed between

appropriate notes and nursing records and the expected results of an audit aimed at the quality of the services provided (COFEN, 2016; MIRANDA, ET. AL., 2016; RIBEIRO, ET. AL., 2018).

The Brazilian Federal Nursing Council (COFEN) establishes rules for completing nursing records. It is important to emphasize that a record must be complete, written legibly, clearly, and coherently, include the date and time of actions, specify the procedures, and contain other information that may be used as quality indicators during an audit (COFEN, 2017; SILVA, 2019).

There is a positive relationship between the correct completion of this information and the quality of health care, since auditors use it as evidence of the procedures performed. This highlights the importance of following the completion rules established by COFEN (ASCARI, 2018; RIBEIRO, 2018; PERTILLE, 2018). From this perspective, the following question arises: "What impacts are generated by the application of nursing instruments to the care provided to patients?"

Therefore, the Nursing Record is an important part of the Nursing Process. It documents patient care and is used to guide not only the assessment of care but also communication among the multidisciplinary team, thereby directing health care. In addition, audits are conducted through this record, making it an important quality indicator. The study of this subject seeks to assess which instruments have been used to make the nursing record a document consistent with its intended purpose. This project is part of a broader approach within a master's project that aims to provide a guiding instrument for nursing records.

## 2. Objectives

### 2.1 General Objective

To identify, through an integrative literature review, which instruments have been applied to improve the quality of nursing records and how they are used in the professional team's daily routine.

### 2.2 Specific Objectives

- To identify the common failures found when nursing records are completed;
- To relate failures in the completion of nursing records to the quality of the health service provided.

## 3. Methodology

This is an integrative literature review consisting of six stages: guiding question, sampling, data collection, critical appraisal of the included studies, discussion, and presentation. The guiding question was: “What impacts are generated by the application of nursing instruments to the care provided to patients?” Thus, the PICO strategy was used, namely P: population/patients; I: intervention; and Co: context. This strategy is used to formulate a clear, concise, and focused question (Aromataris; Munn, 2020).

Articles published in Portuguese, English, or Spanish in the last five years and studies conducted in public hospitals were included. Review articles were excluded.

The search for articles was conducted in the following databases: LILACS (Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature), PUBMED (US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health), CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature), Web of Science, and the SciELO electronic library (Scientific Electronic Library Online). A specific search strategy was developed for each database using the Boolean operators “OR” and/or “AND.” In LILACS, descriptors were selected according to DeCS together with their synonyms.

Terms related to the guiding question were used in the SciELO library. In PUBMED, CINAHL, and Web of Science, descriptors were selected according to MeSH. Web of Science, PubMed, CINAHL, and LILACS were accessed through the CAPES portal, while SciELO was accessed through its official website. Based on this strategy, the research question was formulated using the PICO strategy, and the research descriptors were selected as described in Charts 1 and 2.

Chart 1 – Use of the PICo Strategy.

| **What is the role of biomedical professionals in incorporating integrative practices as a means of promoting health?** |
|---|
| P = Biomedical professionals |
| I = Health education |
| Co = Hospitals and Health Services |

Source: Prepared by the author.

Chart 2 – DeCS Descriptors.

| **Portuguese** | **English** | **Spanish** |
|---|---|---|
| Nursing Records | Nursing Records | Nursing Records |
| Scales | Scale | Scale |

| Portuguese | English | Spanish |
|---|---|---|
| Clinical Procedures | Critical Pathways | Clinical Pathways |
| Patient Care | Patient Care | Patient Care |

Source: Prepared by the author.

## 4. Final Results

Considering the DeCS descriptors, no articles addressing the subject under study were found in PUBMED (US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health). The searches conducted in Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS) and the SciELO electronic library (Scientific Electronic Library Online) were successful.

Table 1 – Search strategies used in the Web of Science, PubMed, CINAHL, and LILACS databases and in the SciELO library. Manaus (AM), Brazil, 2023.

| Databases | Descriptors or Terms | Final Results |
|---|---|---|
| LILACS | (“Nursing records”) AND (“Scales”) AND (“Patient care”) | 6 |
| PUBMED | (“Nursing records”) AND (“Scales”) AND (“Patient care”) | 0 |
| CINAHL | (“Nursing records”) AND (“Scales”) AND (“Clinical procedures”) | 0 |
| WEB OF SCIENCE | (“Nursing records”) AND (“Scales”) AND (“Clinical procedures”) AND (“Patient care”) | 0 |
| SCIELO | (“Health instruments and scales for nursing records”) | 16 |

Source: Thullyan Rolim, 2023.

The selection process for the articles included in the review followed the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion, based on the filters available in the periodical databases. Initially, 22 articles were found. Selection by title yielded 12 articles. In the second stage, selection was based on the abstracts, after which the full texts were rigorously analyzed. Following the reading, only five were found to meet the inclusion criteria (FIGURE 1).

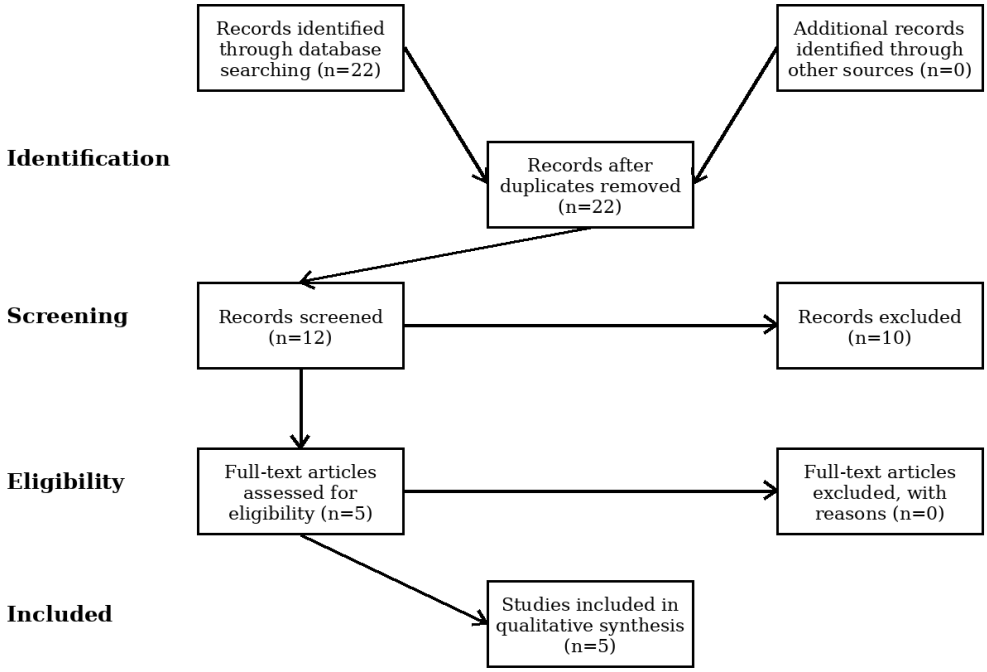


Figure 1 – Methodological flowchart according to the PRISMA model. Manaus (AM), Brazil, 2023.

Regarding methodology, all studies were qualitative, although they used different analytical approaches: descriptive and/or exploratory. The languages included in the inclusion criteria were Portuguese, English, and Spanish, and the articles selected for this study returned results in all three languages, as shown in Chart 3.

Chart 3 – Languages in which the selected articles were published.

| **Language** | **No. of samples retrieved** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Portuguese | 3 | 60% |
| English | 1 | 20% |
| Spanish | 1 | 20% |
| TOTAL | 5 | 100% |

Source: Prepared by the author.

Regarding the origin of the articles and the country in which the research was conducted, three studies were developed in Brazil, one was carried out through a partnership between researchers from Brazil and Portugal, and one through a partnership between researchers from Portugal and Spain.

After the articles were chosen according to the descriptors, search strategies, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and other factors, they were selected by title, abstract, and full text, resulting in the studies presented in Chart 4 below:

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Chart 4 – Information required to identify the five articles comprising the results of this integrative literature review.

| Authors/Year | Title | Country | Objective | Conclusion | Type of approach |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Silva, et. al. (2020) | The effectiveness of the organ donation process under the new legislation. | Brazil | To verify the effectiveness of expediting organ donation under the new Brazilian legislation; to describe the Brazilian Organ Transplantation Law and its subsequent amendments; and to analyze the factors that hinder the organ donation process. | It is therefore concluded that, in view of the findings presented, there is a clear need for more in-depth verification with the competent authorities so that they provide data on the effective completion of organ donation and increase the number of publications that inform and assist health professionals in reducing waiting lists and improving the quality of life of those who strongly hope for an opportunity to receive a transplant. | Qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory. |
| Eira, et. al. (2018) | Organ donation: the reality of a Portuguese intensive care unit. | Portugal | To clinically and demographically characterize potential organ donors admitted to a general intensive care unit, as well as the respective procurement procedures. | Potential organ donors generally died from brain death, were older than middle age, were male, and were victims of hemorrhagic stroke. In addition, most were expanded-criteria donors and donated an average of two to three organs, with the liver and kidneys being the most frequent. | Retrospective study conducted from 2010 to 2015, analyzing demographic and clinical variables and the number of organs and tissues procured. |
| Rasquinho, et. al. (2020) | Nursing interventions in the detection and active treatment of potential organ donors. | Portugal | To develop skills in caring for individuals and families experiencing complex processes of critical illness and/or organ failure. | The shortage of organs available for donation limits the number of transplants, contributing to the growth of the waiting list and the consequent increase in morbidity and mortality among patients with chronic disease. | Qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory. |
| Araújo, et. al. (2020) | Decline in organ donations and transplants in Ceará during the COVID-19 pandemic: a descriptive study, April to June 2020. | Brazil | To describe organ donations and transplants in Ceará, Brazil, after the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. | The numbers of donors and transplants in Ceará declined substantially during the three months following the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially kidney, heart, and corneal procedures. | Descriptive study using data from the Brazilian Organ Transplantation Association. The number of donors and transplants from April to June 2020 was compared with the same period in 2019 and with the first quarter of 2020. |
| Santos, et. al. (2021) | Organ transplantation: death allowing life to continue. | Brazil | To review the current literature on the subject and make the essential factors for an effective understanding of organ transplantation more visible and accessible. | Organ donation in Brazil is highly regulated and based on objective criteria such as brain death and donor consent. | Qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory. |
| Marinho, et. al. (2023) | Characterization of the organ donation process in a region of northeastern Brazil. | Brazil | To analyze the clinical and sociodemographic profile of potential organ donors, as well as the factors that influence organ donation. | Most effective donors were young and male, with traumatic brain injury prevailing as the cause of brain death and family acceptance of donation. | This was a quantitative, cross-sectional, retrospective, and analytical study conducted by collecting data from 455 medical records of patients diagnosed with brain death in a region of northeastern Brazil, using a structured form. |
| Dos Santos, et. al. (2023) | Factors associated with non-donation of organs and tissues in a neurological intensive care unit. | Brazil | To identify factors associated with the non-donation of organs and tissues among potential donors diagnosed with brain death in a Neurological Intensive Care Unit. | The need for greater investment in educational campaigns is emphasized in order to reduce family refusal rates. | Descriptive, cross-sectional, retrospective, documentary study with a quantitative approach. |

| Authors/Year | Title | Country | Objective | Conclusion | Type of approach |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Santos, et. al. (2019) | Current context of organ procurement for transplantation in Minas Gerais. | Brazil | To study the reasons why organ and tissue donation is not completed in Minas Gerais. | This article proposes a study of the efficiency of organ and tissue procurement in the state of Minas Gerais, with the aim of identifying causes of failure such as underreporting, approaches to families, and failure to complete the diagnosis of brain death. | This is basic bibliographic research seeking to satisfy an intellectual need for knowledge without the use of methods and techniques. |

Source: Data from the articles in the integrative literature review.

Given the results above and the context in which the articles are situated, topics were categorized for analysis in the discussion, according to Chart 4.

Chart 5 – Categories proposed for discussion.

| Categories of analysis |
|---|
| Weaknesses of instruments used in patient care |
| Prevention of adverse events through the instruments |
| The impact of professionals in this care context |

Source: Prepared by the author.

## 5. Discussion

Daily activities require information and communication in order to be carried out effectively. In hospitals and health systems, information must be seen as a means of mitigating inconsistencies, shaping the service in question, and improving the quality of care provided. From this perspective, instruments were developed to guide work and identify priorities within this context, with the aim of planning and improving the care process. However, the quality of the data collected is what will truly determine successful patient safety (MILLER, et. al, 2005; GARBUTT, et. al, 2008; BATISTA, et. al, 2014).

Health instruments contribute directly to the care provided to patients. One of these instruments measures the risk of falls among people admitted to hospitals. Health professionals report that falls are a relevant and recurring problem because the population is aging. One study showed that certain falls were caused by the absence of records, whether electronic records or physical instruments that facilitate documentation, stemming from a lack of awareness and motivation/sensitization in fall-risk assessment (ARAÚJO, et. al, 2018).

An important factor for the continuity of the services provided is the use of technology in support of professionals. Such technologies are regarded as instruments that contribute to

day-to-day patient care by facilitating the work of professionals, who are able to optimize services, improve processes, and obtain more effective results (VANDRESEN, et; al, 2022).

The appropriate use of instruments produces reliable data that contribute to patient improvement. The nursing team is therefore responsible for completing them correctly and for affirming the evidence-based nursing care model, since it will be possible to observe the resolution of problems surrounding patients' health issues. Above all, these instruments contribute to the quality of the service provided, and not merely to quantity (BATISTA, et. al, 2014; SILVA, et. al, 2018).

## 6. Final Considerations

Health scale instruments contribute to the care provided to patients. However, what guides the quality of that care is the appropriate completion of these instruments, since, within the relationship between patient and professional, what matters most is the quality of the care provided rather than quantity alone. Therefore, nursing professionals should receive continuing education so that these instruments are increasingly completed correctly, as this facilitates both the professional's work and the improvement of patients' health conditions.

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