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Impact of a Switch to Synchronised Once-monthly ESA Administration on Nurses' Workplace Satisfaction

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Problem: The administration of erythropoietin-stimulating agents (ESAs) can be a time-consuming task for nurses. Time-and-motion studies published have found that in a 100-patient unit, ESA administration takes 31-75 working days per year. Recently a once-monthly ESA has become available, which offers the possibility of Synchronising ESA administration to 2-3 days per month per dialysis unit. This simplified regimen should save time for nursing staff.

Objectives: To investigate whether the introduction of a Synchronised unit-wide ESA schedule will have an effect on nurses' satisfaction with the efficiency of ESA administration, perceived changes to workload. A study of this type has not previously been undertaken.

Approach: Nurses employed in a teaching hospital in Australia participated in this study (N=39). A baseline survey assessed nurses' perceptions of care provided by their unit, views about the initiative and their attitude to their job using a Likert scale. All nursing staff participated in an education session on ESA Synchronisation, and the model introduced as part of an Australian time-and-motion study. A post survey was repeated after 3 months to assess if satisfaction had changed after the initiative.

Result: A McNemars test compared changes in responses to the initial survey with responses to the same questions 3 months later showed that more nurses agreed in the follow-up survey that they would cope well with the introduction of the ESA Synchronisation initiative (P= 0.005). They were more likely to disagree that ESA Synchronisation increased their workload (P= 0.005).

Conclusion: Beside the positive feedback from the nursing staff, this single-centre study found the total time per patient per year for ESA administration is calculated at 1.81 hours. A saving in nursing time was confirmed with this simplified regimen.

Implication: If a positive impact on human resources is demonstrated, this may support a more widespread rollout of once-monthly ESA Synchronisation to other dialysis units.

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