

00548 **Nurses' Perceptions and Experiences of Postoperative Patient Education in an Orthopaedic Ward: A Descriptive Exploratory Qualitative Study**

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Aims: To explore nurses' perceptions and experiences of postoperative patient education and to identify their educational needs.

Methodology: A descriptive exploratory qualitative design was used to elicit the nurses' perceptions and experiences. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit 35 enrolled nurses and registered nurses from an orthopaedic ward at an acute hospital in Singapore. Eight focus groups were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. There were two groups of enrolled nurses, three groups of staff nurses, two groups of resident nurses and advanced practice nurses, and one group of nurse clinicians and nurse managers. The focus groups were homogeneous in terms of designations to capitalize on the participants' shared experiences but differed in terms of the number of years in nursing to elicit a range of views related to their experience. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were thematically analyzed and considered saturated when no new themes emerged.

Result: Five key themes emerged from the nurses' perceptions and experiences: 1) informal teaching practices, 2) nurses' perceived competency in teaching; 3) patient education not perceived as a priority task; 4) role confusion and 5) trust in nurses as patient educators. The findings further shed evidence that nurses in practice do perform informal teaching at the patients' bedside. However, in view that these patient education activities are often embedded in other nursing tasks and carried out as part of the nurse-patient interaction, not all nurses are mindful that teaching has taken place. Across themes, nurses' educational needs identified included limited understanding of informal teaching, not knowing when to teach and how to teach effectively.

Conclusion: The findings from this study could provide guidance on how to develop evidence-based interventions such as continuous professional education for nurses that would adequately prepare and support them in their role and practice as patient educators.