

Emergency Nurse Credentialing – A review of the literature

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Introduction:

The credentialing of nurses has recently become a widely discussed issue in the Australian nursing environment. The College of Emergency Nursing Australasia recently started to explore the benefits and barriers of an emergency nursing credentialing system within Australia. The aim of the review was to examine the credentialing systems used within the international emergency nursing community, to determine the consistency of the programs and their associated outcomes.

Method:

A comprehensive search and evaluation of both peer reviewed and grey literature was conducted using CINAHL Plus, Academic Search Complete and the World Wide Web for the search terms '*emergency nurse*'; '*credentialing*' and '*certification*'. Literature that was related to critical care nursing specialties, or demonstrated related clinical skills to the emergency nursing environment, was included in the review. Literature relating to generic nurse credentialing or certification programs were excluded from the search, in order to enable an informed review of credentialing systems in relation to emergency nursing.

Results:

The review assessed 57 articles gained from the search. The majority of these articles were based from the United States of America and the credentialing processes for nurse practitioners in the emergency department. A significant amount of the literature provided outlines of credentialing systems used for emergency nurses within their specific country. Additional articles outlined credentialing systems for particular skills sets or procedures used within the emergency department or other related critical care specialties. There was limited literature that examined the benefits or barriers to credentialing in the emergency department setting.

Discussion:

Internationally, there is limited peer reviewed information to support the demonstrated benefits or barriers to emergency nurse credentialing. Various countries credential emergency nursing using different models and methods, though terminology is often used interchangeably. There are a number of articles which highlight the benefits of credentialing critical care nurses in advanced clinical skills. Further research is required to demonstrate the effectiveness of credentialing within the emergency nursing environment.