High Number of Nurses With Baccalaureate Degrees: Linked To Lower Rates Of Mortality

Background: A national survey of Registered Nurses revealed that only 45% to 50% of nurses in the United States had earned a baccalaureate degree in nursing (BSN). A multitude of studies have reported a direct relationship between the level of education of the registered nurse and patient outcomes.

Significance: Providing quality patient has become increasingly complicated over the last decade due to:
- Rapid advances in medical knowledge and technology requiring more highly skilled nursing care
- Patients are older and more acutely ill in need of highly skilled and nursing care

Patient Safety: Studies have demonstrated that organizations with higher rates of nurses with a BSN degree are associated with significant reductions in adverse patient outcomes such as:
- Lower rates of failure to rescue
- Lower rates of patient mortality
- A ten-point increase in a hospital’s percentage of BSN prepared nurse is associated with a reduction of 2.12 to 7.47 deaths for every 1,000 patients per year

Recommendations: The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommends that at least 80 percent of the nursing workforce hold a baccalaureate degree by 2020. Nursing practice has become more sophisticated, and outdated educational requirements are no longer adequate.

For more information go to: http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/32/3/579.full.html