Perioperative patient advocacy
-having the patient’s best interests at heart

av

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Abstract


Patient advocacy implies taking action on someone else’s behalf, and has been described as a key element of nurses’ professional care. In the perioperative setting, it involves not only critical decision making, but also all the small things that the nurses do for the sake of the patients during their working day. Since previous research on the advocacy role of a registered nurse anesthetist (RNA) is sparse, and has not been conducted in a Swedish context, this thesis was intended to contribute to a greater understanding of advocacy in the perioperative context. The overall aim was therefore to explore the characteristics and consequences of perioperative patient advocacy (Study I), and to describe RNAs’ views of advocacy in anesthetic nursing through interviews (Study II), a questionnaire (Study III), and observations (Study IV).

The synthesis of the characteristics and consequences of perioperative patient advocacy was interpreted in this thesis as the RNAs having the patient’s best interests at heart, in that they (1) had control of the situation, (2) preserved human values, and finally (3) were emotionally affected, as the results from the four studies suggested this as the core of perioperative patient advocacy.

Perioperative patient advocacy is not always perceived as easy. In praxis, it is linked to the code of ethics outlined by the International Council of Nurses, which states that all registered nurses, regardless of their working context, shall respect human rights, promote health, prevent illness, and ensure that the individual receives accurate and sufficient information. This thesis elaborates on how this is done by describing how RNAs exert perioperative patient advocacy and how they interact in order to facilitate the best possible care for the patient. The results deepen the understanding of perioperative patient advocacy from the RNA’s perspective and contribute to a new insight in the RNA’s professional role.

Keywords: Perioperative, Patient advocacy, Ethics, Advanced nursing, Content analysis, Rasch analysis, Integrated review

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