

OPTIMIZING NURSE WORKFLOW EFFICIENCY: AN EXAMINATION OF NURSE WALKING BEHAVIOR AND SPACE ACCESSIBILITY in Medical Surgical Units

Through a combination of onsite observations and survey data, BSA delved into the impact of spatial layouts on staff movement and satisfaction across two medical-surgical unit floors. The findings highlighted a significant frequency of movements between nurse stations, patient rooms, and medication areas. This study resulted in the critical need for carefully planned spatial adjacency strategies to enhance workflow efficiency and raise clinical staff satisfaction within healthcare facilities.



What is the implication, and what should change now?

In the design of medical-surgical units, it is crucial to prioritize centralized nurse stations, strategically located support areas, optimized corridors, departmental adjacencies, and improved environmental factors. These enhancements are essential for maximizing workflow efficiency, minimizing fatigue, and elevating staff satisfaction and patient care.

The top 5 patient unit design and nurse travel pattern implications for practice:



Proximity of Supplies and Medication:

- Position supply and medication storage spaces near patients for streamlined access and efficient workflow.
- Integrate workstations with essential supplies to minimize staff travel and enhance accessibility.



Location of Equipment:

- Centralize essential equipment rooms near patient beds or treatment zones to ensure swift emergency response and improved patient care.



Team Visibility:

- Design an open inpatient unit layout using transparent partitions and glass doors to foster team visibility, communication, and rapid response to patient needs. Ensure visibility between nurse stations and patient rooms.



Med-Surgical Department Layout:

- Adopt functional clusters grouping related spaces (nurse stations, medication rooms, supply areas) to streamline transitions and minimize travel.
- Strategically locate and provide nurse stations near patient zones to optimize staff travel distances.
- Ensure nurse stations are within sight of each other to enhance communication and reduce travel distances.
- Establish a seamless layout interconnecting different departments for smooth transit for staff, patients, and visitors.
- Provide staff respite areas close to patient rooms and in a central, easily accessible location.
- Enhance efficiency by situating medical supply storage or carts near patient sections to reduce staff travel distances.
- Locate nourishment stations near-patient and nurse station areas for the convenience of clinical staff.

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