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Sepsis recognition and initial care Response monitoring

Adult Health Nursing | Response monitoring

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Fictional educational example. Individualize using verified patient findings, authorized treatment and current local protocols. No real patient record or observed outcome is claimed.

Patient profile and history

64-year-old man with suspected infection and deterioration. Care stage: During review after prescribed initial care.

Medical history: An acute suspected infection is followed by clinical deterioration and reduced urine. The immediate task is organ-function assessment and urgent source-directed care. No known drug allergy is reported in this fictional interview; this does not replace medicine-by-medicine verification in real care.

Surgical history: No previous major operation is reported in this fictional interview. Confirm procedure details, complications and any relevant devices when applying the exercise.

Personal and family assessment: The patient wants to regain the usual level of independence. Review available support, daily activities, treatment access and preferred language rather than assuming these are the same for every person.

Scenario: The team requests a clear account of changes after the prescribed care, rather than a statement that the patient is simply better.

Clinical assessment

Subjective: Feels extremely unwell with weakness and reduced urine.

Objective findings and required checks: Abnormal observations and possible organ dysfunction trigger urgent clinical review.

Physical examination and investigations: Use the local sepsis assessment pathway; obtain indicated lactate, cultures, blood tests and source investigations.

Supply actual values, units, timing and trends during supervised application. Do not invent missing clinical data.

Clinical focus and pathophysiology

Sepsis recognition and initial care: A dysregulated response to infection can impair perfusion and damage organs.

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Medical / surgical management

Escalate urgently, monitor closely and deliver prescribed antimicrobial, fluid and source-control preparations.

Illustrative drug and treatment study

Medicine / treatment	Purpose	Nursing checks
Prescribed antimicrobial	Treat suspected serious infection	Check allergy, obtain cultures without harmful delay and monitor response
prescribed IV fluid	Support assessed circulatory needs	Reassess perfusion and overload risk.

Treatment examples are not a prescription. Verify the authorized product, dose, route, timing, contraindications and current local product information.

Nursing process - ADPIE

Assessment

Feels extremely unwell with weakness and reduced urine. Abnormal observations and possible organ dysfunction trigger urgent clinical review. The team requests a clear account of changes after the prescribed care, rather than a statement that the patient is simply better.

Nursing diagnosis

Prioritize reduced circulation to vulnerable tissues; vulnerability to infection or worsening infection; insufficient fluid replacement for current losses; learning needs about the condition and care plan. Validate each concern against assessment. For an actual problem, link the problem, contributing factors and observed cues; for a risk problem, document the risk factors without invented symptoms.

Planning

At the next scheduled reassessment, with its interval chosen for acuity: document a patient-specific baseline and measurable target. Agree short- and longer-term outcomes with the patient/caregiver; physiological safety takes priority over teaching and discharge tasks.

Implementation

Escalate urgently, monitor closely and deliver prescribed antimicrobial, fluid and source-control preparations. Compare the current assessment with the documented baseline and identify benefit, harm or lack of response. Document care, prescribed treatment, consent and escalation.

Evaluation

Compare reassessment with each stated outcome. Mark met, partly met or not met using observed evidence, document the review time and revise the plan. This vignette provides no completed patient outcome.

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Nursing care plan

Nursing diagnoses use original clinical problem wording. They are not the licensed NANDA-I classification. Verify any formal label or code against your institution's licensed current edition; select actual or risk diagnoses only when supported by assessment.

Context task: Compare the current assessment with the documented baseline and identify benefit, harm or lack of response.

Set individualized measurable targets and an exact review time. Select actual or risk statements only when supported by assessment.

Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask about dizziness, chest discomfort, fatigue and cold extremities. Assess: Assess consciousness, pulse, blood pressure, capillary refill and urine trend.	Reduced circulation to vulnerable tissues. Possible factors: altered blood flow or cardiac function. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: At the next scheduled reassessment, with its interval chosen for acuity: Circulation and consciousness remain within the clinician-agreed targets. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Describes symptoms that require immediate review and the agreed follow-up plan.	1. Trend perfusion findings and escalate new chest pain, shock or altered consciousness immediately. Rationale: Poor circulation can rapidly threaten organ function. 2. Balance activity and rest and maintain the ordered monitoring schedule. Rationale: Reducing demand supports recovery while trends guide treatment. 3. Administer prescribed therapy and monitor effects and adverse reactions. Rationale: Response monitoring supports safe correction of the underlying problem. 4. Escalate urgently, monitor closely and deliver prescribed antimicrobial, fluid and source-control preparations. Rationale: A dysregulated response to infection can impair perfusion and damage organs. The condition-specific plan addresses the underlying problem while response is monitored.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask about exposure, wound symptoms and recent invasive devices. Assess: Inspect relevant sites and monitor systemic findings and investigation trends.	Vulnerability to infection or worsening infection. Possible factors: disrupted barriers, exposure or reduced host defence. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: At the next scheduled reassessment, with its interval chosen for acuity: Aseptic care is maintained and any new signs of infection are escalated promptly. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Demonstrates relevant hygiene and explains the infection-prevention plan.	1. Use hand hygiene and risk-based standard or transmission precautions. Rationale: Interrupting transmission protects the patient, staff and other patients. 2. Review invasive device need with the team and maintain indicated aseptic care. Rationale: Unnecessary devices and barrier breaks increase infection exposure. 3. Monitor for systemic deterioration and administer prescribed antimicrobials on schedule. Rationale: Early escalation and timely indicated treatment reduce avoidable harm.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.
Ask: Ask about thirst, intake, vomiting, stools and dizziness. Assess: Monitor weight trend, intake/output, mucosa, circulation and relevant electrolytes.	Insufficient fluid replacement for current losses. Possible factors: intake below requirements or increased fluid loss. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: At the next scheduled reassessment, with its interval chosen for acuity: Hydration and circulation improve within the agreed reassessment interval. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Patient or caregiver explains the individualized fluid plan and warning signs.	1. Measure intake and losses using age-appropriate methods. Rationale: Accurate trends guide replacement and help prevent overcorrection. 2. Offer oral fluids only when swallowing, consciousness and the treatment plan permit; otherwise implement prescribed replacement. Rationale: The safest route depends on aspiration risk and clinical severity. 3. Reassess perfusion, weight and laboratory trends after prescribed replacement. Rationale: Both continued dehydration and fluid overload require prompt recognition.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask what the learner already knows and wants to understand. Assess: Use teach-back or demonstration to identify specific gaps.	Learning needs about the condition and care plan. Possible factors: new information, complex treatment or limited prior teaching. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: At the next scheduled reassessment, with its interval chosen for acuity: Explains the most important immediate action in their own words. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Demonstrates the agreed care skills and names follow-up and warning signs.	1. Assess language, literacy, hearing, vision and preferred learning method. Rationale: Accessible teaching improves understanding. 2. Teach a few condition-specific points using plain language and demonstration. Rationale: Focused information is easier to retain and apply. 3. Use teach-back, correct misunderstandings and provide an accessible written plan. Rationale: Checking understanding supports safer self-management. 4. After stabilization explain treatment, recovery needs and urgent return signs. Rationale: Condition-specific teaching connects the treatment plan to safe continuing care.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Health education and continuing care

After stabilization explain treatment, recovery needs and urgent return signs.

Transition only after clinical readiness is confirmed. Reconcile medicines, check access and caregiver support, and document who will review the patient and when.

Urgent warning signs

Shock, altered consciousness, severe respiratory distress or rapidly falling urine output requires immediate emergency team response.

Evaluation and conclusion

For each goal, document met, partly met or not met using observed evidence and the review time. Reassess and revise if progress is inadequate. Individual assessment, prioritized care and coordinated review guide this topic.

Quick Revision

- A dysregulated response to infection can impair perfusion and damage organs.

- Priority concerns: Reduced circulation to vulnerable tissues; Vulnerability to infection or worsening infection; Insufficient fluid replacement for current losses; Learning needs about the condition and care plan.

- Shock, altered consciousness, severe respiratory distress or rapidly falling urine output requires immediate emergency team response.

- After stabilization explain treatment, recovery needs and urgent return signs.

Exam / viva: Which observations demonstrate response, and which findings would require revising or stopping the current intervention?

References

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