Critical Care Nurse Rounder

Laura M. Kraszewski

Ferris State University
This paper describes the role of Critical Care Nurse Rounder (CCRN). This is a role that is performed by critical care nurses that have been working in the intensive care unit (ICU) for greater than six months, have strong leadership skills, and show interest in the role. Yoder-wise (2011) describes leadership as:

“the process of engaged decision making linked with actions taken in the face of complex, unchartered, or perilous circumstances present in clinical situations for which no standardized solution exists” (p. 5).

This definition encompasses the entire role of CCNR. The individual that I chose to interview is a BSN nurse and has about 7 years of nursing experience, all in critical care. She has been filling in as CCNR for approximately 2 years. Each nurse that is performing the role as CCNR has a rotation scheduled for this role in their 6 week schedule. This reduces the chance of burnout in the role and allows the nurse to still practice their bedside nursing skills.

**Job Duties**

Annually, the CCNR is held to the same expectations as the other staff critical care nurses. They are expected to keep their ACLS and other education up to date. On a monthly basis, it is expected that they attend the CCNR Meeting where issues that arise from their role are discussed and processes are reviewed with management. This is also a time that each CCNR can discuss how their role utilization can be improved.

The CCNR is responsible for rounding on the critical care patients at the beginning and end of their shift. They also round and check on patients that have recently been transferred out of the intensive care unit. This allows the nurse to make sure the patient is stable and doing well. This is a venue for preventing readmission to the ICU. Each CCRN is also available by phone for
the other floors in the hospital. Patients’ that “just don’t look right” can be seen by the nurse rounder and evaluated. A checklist is followed to review each patient in regards to admission to the ICU. The intensive care physician is notified of the patient’s condition. They will then see the patient if warranted.

The CCNR responds to each Rapid Response Team (RRT) call, if he/she isn’t the one to call the RRT. A CCNR is especially important in an Emergency Response Team (ERT) as they are in charge of running the defibrillator. Their primary role in each situation varies, yet they are an important leadership role nonetheless. Cross et al. (2012) does an excellent job summing up the description of responsibilities of a CCNR:

“(1) averting admissions from general wards into intensive care or ensuring that admissions occur within a timely manner, (2) facilitating discharge of patients from intensive care and supporting their recovery in general wards, and (3) sharing critical care skills with staff on the wards” (Cross et al., 2012).

Collaboration

A CCNR collaborates with many different members of the patient care team. He/she will collaborate with each critical care nurse to make sure all their needs are met throughout the shift. They talk to the intensive care physicians, interns, and residents about patients that they see on the other floors that could potentially be ICU admissions.

Our CCNRS also collaborate with our main manager for the intensive care unit. Updates on processes are often brought to her about nurse concerns. Each CCNR is not only acting on behalf of our patient’s, but also as a nurse liaison to our manager.
Ethical Issues

One particular ethical issue that the CCNR I interviewed is involved in is constantly making sure they do not practice outside of their scope. Being one of the first people on the “scene” for a patient who is not doing so well occasionally creates a situation where the CCNR is responsible for getting certain treatments started. The American Nurse Association’s Definition of Nursing embraces what our CCNR are reminded of consistently to keep their nursing within the scope of practice:

“Nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations” (ANA, 2010).

Power and influence

The CCNR role is often perceived as having more of an influence in regards to physician interaction when calling about a patient that isn’t doing so well. The CCNR described an incident where a patient wasn’t doing well with low blood pressure and low urine output. The floor nurse called the nurse rounder and let her know and informed her that the physician was notified and wasn’t ordering treatment for this patient. The CCNR evaluated the patient and called the physician, and in turn fluid boluses were ordered. I see this as an instance of power and influence. The CCNR has power with action and advocating for the needs of the patient.

Decision-making and problem-solving
The previous scenario continued throughout the shift. The patient wasn’t doing well and needed admission to the ICU. With collaboration of the physician and CCNR, as well as the patient’s primary nurse, it was decided to transfer the patient to intensive care. There are protocols that the CCNR has to be familiar with, such as the sepsis protocol we have. Decision-making is always a collaborative effort between the physicians and the nurses. This case was not any different.

**Management and resolution of conflict**

Sometimes the CCNR has to deal with conflict between providers. In this case, the CCNR acts somewhat like a peace keeper, helping to keep in mind the patient: that they are the center of care, the reason we are nurses and physicians. Once incident resulted in the CCNR being a mediator, allowing the nurse and physician to talk their conflict out. There was miscommunication in this incident and the CCNR helped to resolve it.

The CCNR role is one that is held in high regard by our hospital. I hope someday to get a chance to perform my nursing skills in this role. It will help me to improve leadership skills and become a better-rounded leader in my field.
References

