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TOPIC: Safe nursing staffing levels can significantly improve patient centered care by enhancing the quality of care, improving communication and collaboration, improving patient safety, and enhancing patient satisfaction with their care.

Question: How does safe and adequate nursing staffing in acute care settings affect patient outcomes such as quality of care, patient safety, satisfaction, and healing?

P= Adult patients in an acute care setting

I= Adequate nursing staffing

C= Insufficient nursing staffing

O= Improved patient outcomes, safety, and satisfaction

Clinical Scenario:

In med/surg or acute care units nursing staffing is very important. During certain shifts, times of the year, or scenarios, nurses are assigned more than the safe nurse to patient ratio. Due to this unsafe ratio, patients are waiting longer to have their needs addressed, personalized care opportunities are decreased, and the stress on the nurses and risk for burn-out is increased.

During these unsafe times, patient safety is a very big concern. Nurses will have less time to respond to urgent patient needs, therefore putting the patient at risk for their condition to decline. Other concerns for patient safety related to proper nursing staffing is falls and medication errors.

Patient satisfaction during these times will also be a concern. Because it takes longer for the nurse to respond to the patient's needs and provide less personalized care, the patient will most likely become frustrated with the lack of care and communication from their healthcare team.

When a unit is properly and safely staffed with nurses, fewer adverse events will occur, patient satisfaction will increase, and the patients will be safer overall. Nurses will have more time to spend with their patients and be able to perform more focused and quality assessments, talk with them, and provide excellent care.