Exploring Clinical Judgment Affecting Safe Medication Administration with Reflective Journaling

Regina Jillapalli, PhD, RN; Brandy Wells, MSN, RN, CNL; Crystal Brewer, MSN, RN

School of Nursing, College of Health Professions, Texas State University

Background

- Newly graduated nurses allocate more than 50% of their time to administering pharmacological and parenteral therapies across over 97% of healthcare facilities.
- Safe medication administration (SMA) is vital in patient-centered care and directly influences patient outcomes.
- Previous studies captured competence or medication errors among registered nurses and senior nursing students. However, these studies were episodic versus longitudinal.
- No research specifically addresses the impact of self-reflection on clinical judgment in SMA.
- This longitudinal quasi-experimental descriptive study is exclusive and has never been done before.

Last Line of Defense

Nurses are often the last line of safety checks… a unique and important responsibility.

The Rights of Medication Administration:

- Right Patient
- Right Time
- Right Drug
- Right Dose
- Right Route

Purpose and Participants

Specific Aim:

- Explore the impact of reflective journaling on clinical judgment affecting safe medication administration among prelicensure nursing students

Participants:

- Prelicensure nursing students enrolled in their clinical course at the end of their junior year

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

- All students enrolled in the clinical course participated in the study. No student was excluded from participating in the study.

Methods

Longitudinal quasi-experimental descriptive study

Instrument

- Clinical Judgment Rubric-Reflective Journal (CJR-RJ).
  - Evaluates clinical judgment acquisition, participants' perception of competency, and identifies gaps in CJ regarding SMA.

Procedure

- Students submitted the CJR-RJ after participating in a medication administration simulation involving a single patient at the conclusion of their acute care clinical practicum, which is part of the course requirements.
- The faculty provided feedback at the end of the simulation.
- Data from the CJR-RJ was assessed in aggregate using inductive analysis.

References available upon request

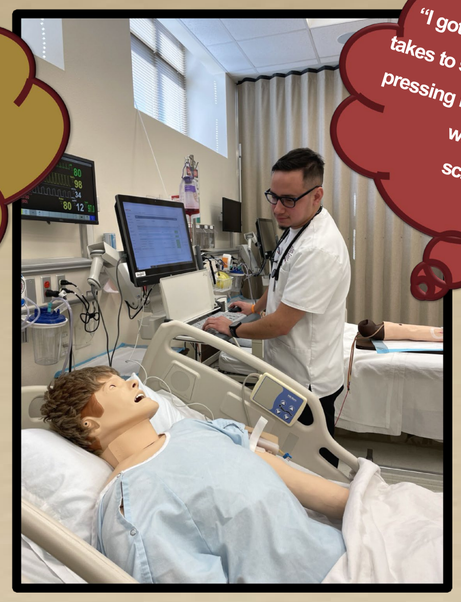
Findings

Evidence of Clinical Judgment Development	
Themes	Subthemes
INSIGHT	Higher Level Thinking
	Growth in Process of CJ Development
	Recognizing the Need for New Knowledge
	Complexity
	Introspection
	Comfort Zone

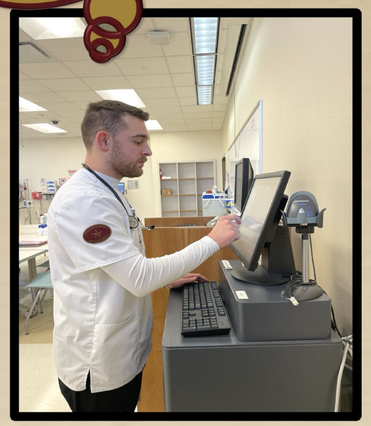
Limitations to Clinical Judgment Development	
Themes	Subthemes
MISSING THE BIG PICTURE	Missing Assessment, Interpretations, & Patient Priorities
	Inappropriate Provider Communication
TUNNEL VISION	Singular Focus on Familiar Patient Problems

The CJR-RJ tool revealed participant competence and gaps related to SMA.

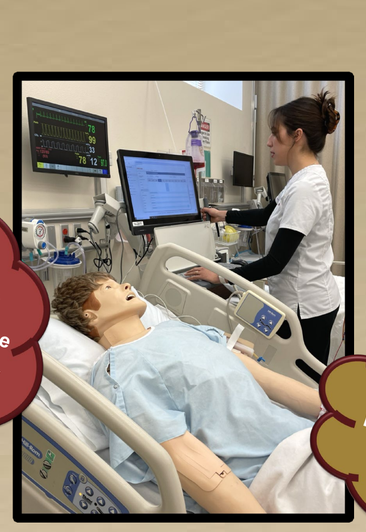
"I was pretty confident in my ability before the experience, and now I know I need to look at the patient's individual aspects closer now. I knew I still had things to learn and work on, so this just made me more motivated, and I feel like it gave me some direction on where to work on."



"I got a better understanding for the time it takes to safely administer medications and the pressing nature of it when on a med-surg floor when 5 other patients are also scheduled for medications."









"My administration skills expanded by learning the importance of knowing medication compatibility, Knowing the pts lab values…"

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Conclusion

- Explore the impact of reflective journaling on clinical judgment affecting safe medication administration among prelicensure nursing students
- SMA involves timely administration of prioritized medications at the right dose to the correct patient using proper routes.

Implications for Nursing Education

- Inform changes in teaching pedagogies and evaluation methods for CJ acquisition related to SMA.

Implications for Transition to Practice

- Evaluating CJ acquisition is paramount to ensuring a competent nursing workforce.
- Self-reflection evaluates clinical judgment acquisition, perception of competency, and identifies gaps in CJ regarding SMA.

Current Study

- The current data is part of a longitudinal study to explore clinical judgment in SMA.
- Additional data will be gathered in the clinical practicum simulations involving multiple patients prior to the participants' graduation.

Future Studies

- Explore clinical judgment acquisition during and after transition to practice
- Recommend longitudinal studies involving nursing graduates at predetermined intervals during their transition to practice and the following years of practice.