

Registered Nurses contribution to patient safety in home healthcare

Catharina Lindberg

Department of Health and Caring Sciences, Linnaeus University

Jenni Fock

Centre for Healthcare Development, University Hospital Linköping

Per Nilsen

Department of Health, Medicine and Caring Sciences, Linköping University

Kristina Schildmeijer

Department of Health and Caring Sciences, Linnaeus University

Background

In accordance with the international development of health care, and with an aging population and rapid technical development, more and more care are executed in the patient's own home. This care environment is in many ways unpredictable and involves both formal and informal caregivers, making it a potentially unsafe care context. There is a lack of knowledge about how patient safety is looked after in home health care in Sweden and how Registered Nurses (RNs) work to prevent risks and contribute to patient-safe care.

Aim of the study

The aim was to describe how RNs might contribute to patient safety in home healthcare.

Methods

We used a qualitative design with open-ended individual interviews with thirteen RNs working in different municipalities in the southeast of Sweden. The participants were recruited using purposeful sampling to achieve a heterogeneous sample. The narratives were analysed with inductive content analyses and led to three categories with associated subcategories.

Results

The preliminary findings shows that RNs in contributing to patient safety in home health care have to: secure the home as a care environment; be one step ahead, and take an active role in a complex organizational healthcare context.

Conclusions and implications

It is a great challenge for RNs to contribute to and to maintain patient safety when performing care at the patient's own home. This requires a continuity-driven care not only built on self-trust among the RNs themselves but also on trustful relationships with patients, next-of-kins, colleagues and other personnel.