

A systematic review of observational instruments used to assess nurses' skills in patient mobilisation

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Abstract

Aims and objectives. The aim of this study was to identify and describe the existing observation instruments that are used to assess nurses' skills in patient mobilisation and to evaluate the psychometric properties of the included instruments.

Background. Structured knowledge about instruments for assessing nurses' skills in patient mobilisation is limited.

Design. Systematic review.

Methods. Studies were identified via electronic database searches and reference lists and were included based on the eligibility criteria. Data regarding the type of instrument, the number of items/domains and the psychometric properties of the instruments were extracted, and the quality of the instruments were appraised according to Zwakhalen et al.'s (BMC Geriatrics, 2006) proposed criteria.

Results. A total of 26 studies, reporting on 16 instruments, were included in this review. The instruments differed in terms of: (1) type of patient-mobilisation task, (2) focus of the instrument, (3) level of structure and (4) use by the observer. Most of the instruments were developed and used in evaluation studies that measured nurses' mobilisation techniques as an outcome of an educational intervention. The total quality score of the included instruments varied between 6–11 points out of a maximum quality score of 19.

Conclusion. Although patient mobilisation is part of nurses' everyday work, we suggest from the results of this review that no common consensus exists about the best way to perform patient-mobilisation tasks. The results from this study further show that no instrument measured all of the important aspects of effective patient mobilisation.

Relevance for clinical practice. Most of the instruments that were reviewed were able to detect differences in patient-mobilisation techniques. However, convincing evidence is lacking with regard to the content, psychometric properties and practicability of these instruments for use in clinical practice. We suggest the development and validation of a new comprehensive instrument.