

The worried criteria

By: Gooske Douw

General ward nurses play a crucial role in early detection of deteriorating ward patients. Nurses not only base their judgment of a patient's condition on objective criteria but also on subjective signs. Based on a systematic review we summarised these signs in nine indicators: the Dutch-Early-Nurse-Worry-Indicator-Score (DENWIS) and studied the role of nurses' worry and DENWIS as indicators of deterioration in surgical ward patients. Both worry and DENWIS proved to be good predictors of deterioration and improve prediction of unplanned ICU-admission based on the local EWS. After implementation of DENWIS we saw improvement in patient outcomes. Presence of worry and DENWIS-indicators before vital signs change make them important in the early period of deterioration. We objectified nurses' worry providing a tool to support nurses in daily practice making communication on subtle signs of deterioration transparent and transferrable.