

# Using Knowledge Translation Strategies in Improving Nursing Shift Handover in Intensive Care Units: A Systematic Review

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## Abstract

**Background:** Ineffective communication during nursing shift handover threatens patient safety. The intensive care unit (ICU) presents a unique environment that requires high quality handover due to the complexity of the patients' needs and the time-pressured and event-driven nature of the environment. Despite calls over several decades for change, there remains a practice gap in improving handover practice. Knowledge translation(KT) is a way to bridge this gap; however, there is uncertainty about the impact of utilizing knowledge translation strategies in improving nursing shift handover practice in the intensive care unit.

### **Objectives:**

To investigate whether knowledge translation strategies are effective for improving quality of handover practice and patient outcomes in the ICU.

### **Design:**

Systematic review

### **Data source:**

Cumulative Index for Nursing and Allied Health Professionals (CINAHL Plus), MEDLINE, Web of Science, and the Cochrane Database of Systematic were searched combining terms for knowledge translation, handover, nursing, and intensive care unit.

### **Review method:**

Following screening, the data were extracted and reported based on the PRISMA-Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses. The quality of included studies was evaluated by utilized the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool.

### **Results:**

Four studies met the inclusion criteria. The studies in this review demonstrate that both the effectiveness of KT interventions for improving handover practice in the ICU and the clinical outcomes were limited. All the studies were observational, and their overall methodology quality was weak to moderate.

### **Conclusions:**

Whilst reporting and methodological limitations in the included studies limit the ability to draw conclusions on the impact of utilising knowledge translation strategies in improving shift handover in the ICU