Sharing notes improves care

I was disturbed to read Marc Cornock’s reply to ‘Can I read my own hospital notes?’ (opinion, 12 October).

His reply may be correct for medical notes but is certainly wrong if it applies to nursing notes. Sharing nursing notes with a patient is an essential part of care planning and involving them in their care.

Community nurses routinely leave the nursing notes in the patient’s home, partly to maintain continuity when care is provided by several visiting nurses, but also, importantly, to support and involve relatives and other informal carers.

Pregnant women receiving care from midwives have for years carried their own notes. In hospitals the notes should be kept at the bottom of the bed, accessible to the patient.

Have we forgotten the mantra ‘Nothing about me without me’ and the furore over the Liverpool care pathway?

Dame June Clark, RN

Marc Cornock responds:
I agree nurses should be involving patients in their care and writing patient notes in a comprehensible way.

However, many wards and units do not place patient notes at the end of the bed but hold them in a collective area. In the notes I have seen, nurses are as guilty as others of writing in a way the patient would not understand, for example using abbreviations and shorthand.

The central tenet of my response, that a patient does not have an automatic right to their notes, is legally correct. Nurses sharing their notes is a higher standard to be welcomed, but it is not the current universal standard.

Nursing associates

The new nursing associate role takes nurses further away from patient care, the reason people choose nursing. Has anyone asked nurses how they feel about overseeing someone, taking the flak if something goes wrong? This is just a way of justifying lower nurse numbers, while cutting bursaries and hoping that will help.

Nadine Falconer

It seems that RNs are moving further away from hands-on care. I went into nursing to work directly with patients, not to have someone else do the part I love doing because I’m too busy doing paperwork. How can you assess a patient you have nothing to do with directly?

Dani ML

The powers that be decided that SENs were not required and insisted they had to become RGNs. Several years later we find that we cannot manage without SENs after all, so they get rehashed with a new title. What a waste of time and money.

Alexandra Cox

HCA regulation

I’m proud to be a healthcare assistant (HCA) and aim to do my best by patients and provide evidence-based care. I think it’s time for regulation of HCAs. We need the protection, as do the nurses who delegate to us.

Clare Dory Rogers

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