



## Cardiovascular surgery from the current perspective of the nursing professional

*La cirugía cardiovascular desde la perspectiva actual del profesional de enfermería*

### Dear Editor

We are encouraged to write to you taking into account that non-communicable diseases, especially cardiovascular diseases, are currently a heavy burden on health systems worldwide. Multiple epidemiological investigations show that in Cuba their incidence and prevalence are similar to the rest of the world. This problem will continue to increase as survival and population aging increase, as well as other known associated risk factors. In the statistical yearbook of Cuba, heart disease caused the death of 44,780 people in 2022, which constituted an increase of 10 % compared to the previous year. <sup>(1, 2)</sup>

Cardiovascular surgery is an alternative to fully or partially correct heart disease. A fundamental part of the surgical team is nursing professionals, who are made up of personnel specialized in critical care or have extensive experience in caring for people with cardiovascular conditions. It has been found that the greater the commitment and emphasis on work by these professionals in the surgical context, the less damage and complications there are. <sup>(3)</sup>

The nursing team addresses the care of the individual from all spheres of care and achieves a comprehensive understanding beyond the biological parameters that generally direct traditional medical care. Due to the different profiles and multidisciplinary nature of perioperative care in cardiovascular surgery, there is a need for greater initiative in the care and management of sick people in all aspects of the profession. <sup>(3)</sup>

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### **Nursing care in the preoperative period of cardiovascular surgery**

1. The nurse should interview the patient; review the patient's medical history and background upon admission to the hospital.

2. Evaluate the patient for cardiac surgery with special attention and guidance on:

- Primary heart problem leading to surgery.
- Conditions that increase the risk of surgery: chronic degenerative diseases, combined heart problems, kidney, lung, gastrointestinal conditions, immune problems or hematological conditions.
- Patient lifestyle: diet, exercise, substance abuse, drug use, family and social support.
- Nutritional status: obesity, malnutrition or nutritional deficiencies.
- Level of anxiety due to situations such as: alteration in family dynamics, loss of organic function and reintegration into work and sexual life.
- Fears related to surgery.
- Cultural practices and religious beliefs.

3. The nurse explains to the patient and family members during their hospital stay, using simple and clear words, what their illness and surgical therapy consist of.

4. Establishes empathy with the patient to encourage him/her to express his/her concerns and fears about surgery and resolves them.

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5. Teaches relaxation techniques that reduce anxiety in the preoperative period and pain control with analgesics during the postoperative period.

### **Nursing care during cardiovascular surgery**

The work of the nursing staff in the surgical procedure is aimed at maintaining the integrity and safety of the sterile field. They also assist the surgeon; maintain order and strict compliance with the established rules in the operating room. The work of the nursing staff in the operating room allows a reduction in the preparation time of the operating room, as well as accidents and complications during the surgical intervention.

### **Nursing care in the postoperative period of cardiovascular surgery**

In the postoperative period, the nursing team provides support to the patient and family members during the patient's recovery. Assistance actions are carried out and the patient is also cared for from all spheres of care to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the patient beyond the biological parameters that generally direct traditional medical care.<sup>(4)</sup>

The authors consider that the role of nursing staff in the context of cardiovascular surgery ranges from patient care to psychological support for the patient and his or her family, in order to mitigate stress and anxiety about the procedure. Nursing professionals are thus placed in a unique position to serve as a link between increasingly specialized care, due to the technological development of cardiovascular surgery, and more personal care, also focused on the needs of people. It is the responsibility of this profession to assume these functions, through care and seeking tools that help implement interventions as one of the pillars for its development.

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