

## Paper Session D5: Promoting Patient Safety

### *Student Nurse Perceptions of Patient Safety in the Acute Care Setting*

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**Purpose:** The purpose of the research was threefold: to document and analyze student nurse perceptions and observations regarding patient safety; to test a certain framework for classifying errors or threats to safety; and to experiment with focus groups as a mechanism for collection of qualitative data for use in nursing research regarding patient safety.

**Background:** The patient safety literature does not compare student nurse error rates or processes to those of experienced nurses. The patient safety and nurse education literature focuses only on special risks, not on student assets.

**Methods:** Descriptive qualitative design was utilized. Semi-structured interviews of two focus groups of senior baccalaureate nursing students (n=9) (both traditional and second bachelor) were conducted. The data were categorized according to the Eindhoven model of incident causation as modified for health care and the Rasmussen error classification system.

**Results:** Of the 77 items categorized, 52 (68%) represented system failures while 25 (32%) resulted from human error. Focus groups were an effective means of collecting important information about the perceptions of student nurses on types of errors that they observed in the care environment. The process demonstrated that focus groups are effective for collecting qualitative data. This study helped to support and clarify the use of the adapted Eindhoven model and Rasmussen error classification system for understanding the nurse's role in the identification and correction of errors in health care. Incidental findings included that second bachelor and traditional students seemed to think differently about safety.

**Conclusions and Implications:** Student nurses reported working in cultures that tolerated violations of policy and procedure that could result in patient harm. Student nurses are concerned about system failures, and second bachelor students seemed particularly concerned about how knowledge gaps may contribute to making errors. The findings have implications for nursing education and for patient safety research.