Medical-Surgical Nursing

If you’ve ever been hospitalized or visited a patient in the hospital, the nurse who cared for you or your loved one was most likely a medical-surgical nurse.

Medical-surgical nursing is the single largest nursing specialty in the United States. Registered nurses in this specialty practice primarily on hospital units and care for adult patients who are acutely ill with a wide variety of medical problems and diseases or are recovering from surgery.

**Why Med-Surg Nursing is Unique**

The most distinguishing characteristic of med-surg nurses is that they are master coordinators. They are the orchestra conductors, the movie producers, and the air traffic controllers of their hospital units.

As such, med-surg nurses are some of the most skilled and cool-headed multitaskers you will ever meet.

At any moment, a med-surg nurse is juggling care for several patients – administering medications, educating families, discharging patients and admitting new ones, all while keeping the entire health care team on the same page.

As the go-to health care professional on the unit, the med-surg nurse needs high-level critical thinking skills, vast knowledge of disease states and body systems, robust management skills, and the ability to stay calm under pressure.

Med-surg nurses are always in motion physically, clinically, intellectually, and emotionally. They are the health care professionals who are coordinating care for patients 24/7.
Many nursing specialties require similar skill sets, but it is the intense level of coordination from the time patients arrive on the unit until after they leave – including post-discharge considerations like transportation and home health care – that distinguishes med-surg nursing.

There’s another unique aspect of the specialty: med-surg nurses are well educated in the workings of all body systems and are also familiar with a sweeping number of illnesses. They never know what complex disease states their next patient may have, thus they need to be ready and prepared for anything.

Once they have assessed and treated their patients, med-surg nurses then take it a step further, helping their patients achieve wellness and transition home safely and well-prepared.

**Med-Surg Nurses’ Compassion and Commitment**

When med-surg nurses talk about their practice, their pride and passion is evident. Add to that the compassion they feel for their patients and the fulfillment of changing lives for the better.

“I love the challenge of working with patients who have all kinds of disease processes and different co-morbidities. As a med-surg nurse, you use your brain and your heart at the same time.”

*Kathleen Lattavo, RN, CNS-MS, CMSRN, RN-BC, ACNS-BC

**AMSN Past President, 2012-2014**

Med-surg nurses coordinate and innovate patient care every day. They apply sophisticated skills to help reduce hospital readmissions and prevent complications like falls and pressure ulcers.

They are the frontline providers who have more facetime with patients than any other professional in the hospital while also planning care, listening to patients’ concerns, and answering loved ones’ questions.

The challenges are many, the demands are high, and as med-surg nurses will tell you, so are the rewards.
Medical-Surgical Nursing

Elevator Speech

If you’ve ever been hospitalized or visited a patient in the hospital, the nurse who cared for you or your loved one was most likely a medical-surgical nurse.

Medical-surgical nursing is the single largest nursing specialty in the United States. Med-surg nurses practice primarily on hospital units and care for adult patients who are acutely ill with a wide variety of medical issues or are recovering from surgery. They provide care 24/7 and have more facetime with patients than any other professional in the hospital.

Med-surg nurses are the master coordinators of the unit, juggling care for many patients at a time while keeping the entire health care team on the same page. They have high-level critical thinking skills, vast clinical knowledge, and are able to stay calm under pressure. Many nursing specialties require similar skill sets, but it is the intense level of coordination from the time patients arrive until after they leave the hospital that distinguishes med-surg nursing.