Abstract

The effectiveness of frequent and aggressive oral care in reducing the rates of Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia (VAP) in mechanically ventilated patients has been extensively researched with a strong correlation being evident. Although the recommendations for method, frequency, and preferred oral-care tools vary, the evidence has led to frequent oral care of mechanically ventilated patients becoming a standard practice in most Intensive Care Units and other facilities caring for mechanically ventilated patients. The literature review reveals less research has been performed on the rates of compliance and documentation with these policies among nurses. In spite of education, training, and overwhelming evidence of the value of oral care, studies of the level of compliance with oral care policy has been neglected. This paper looks at the perceived barriers that nurses feel reduce their compliance with oral care policies. Nurses assigned to care for mechanically ventilated patients in both acute and long term care facilities are asked to complete a questionnaire assessing knowledge of facility policy, frequency of oral care provided, policy compliance, and perceived barriers to compliance with oral care policy. This examination of perceived barriers to oral care among the nurses tasked to provide this care will allow for the identification of barriers and the opportunity of nurse leaders, managers and facilities to remove barriers to this vital practice.