



THIRD EDITION

Critical
Care
Nursing
OF
Older
Adults

BEST
PRACTICES

Marquis D. Foreman
Koen Milisen
Terry T. Fulmer
EDITORS

SPRINGER  PUBLISHING COMPANY

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EDITION

Critical Care
Nursing of Older
Adults
Best Practices

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Foreword

How important is this book? It's simple to answer this question if my words are not considered to be hyperbole. When one writes a foreword to a book it is expected that he or she will be enthusiastic and very complimentary. For why else would the authors ask for a foreword if not for an endorsement?

But in this case my enthusiasm is closer to excitement than to any other emotion; well, perhaps excitement and gratitude. The contents of this book, read serially or in pieces, are vitally needed right now. Our hospitals are filled with older people who, more often than not, are in critical care units for part of their hospital stay. The myriad problems they experience are described in detail with theoretical and evidence-based interventions. The experts—who are academics/clinicians—have been close to geriatrics for much of their professional lives. They are sharing with the reader the wisdom they have gained and this knowledge, applied by others, will improve the care of our older patients immeasurably.

The book's contents run the gamut of elder problems and care: physiology, pharmacology, nutrition, restraints, substance abuse, family involvement, sepsis, and so on; it is a compendium that can be used as a text or a resource. My preference would be for readers to become familiar with the contents and approach sections when you need them most so that their value will be immediately accessible. Written by nurses and physicians, the material covered is aided by the use of numerous case studies that illustrate and exemplify emblematic problems and solutions.

I would like to point out something that we often overlook when considering hospitalized patients of all ages. This is the importance of family visiting; attendance is vital wherever the patient is on the health–illness continuum. Years ago, in looking for a subject for my doctoral dissertation, my 1 1/2-year-old son had an emergency herniorrhaphy. Having studied and worked in psychiatric nursing I was very familiar with the works of Anna Freud and John Bowlby concerning separation of young children from parents during hospitalization (or war time). I chose this area of study and later, after publication of the monograph (Fagin, 1966), which led to national changes in hospital visiting privileges for parents, I thought and wrote about the importance of families during other times of life as well. This book touches on the subject of family visitation and acknowledges the deficits for patients in critical care because of restricted visiting. This resonated strongly with me because of my past work, but also because of dealing with my older sister's illness and repeated admissions to the ICU. Knowing I was there for her made a huge difference in her recovery.

The reader will find other areas of particular interest because of their own professional and personal backgrounds. But all health care providers need part or all of the content of this book. We must get acute and critical care nursing “right” for the sake of the patient and the health care system. Currently, hospitals are places that

are more often feared than seen as places of refuge and healing. I believe nursing can and must change this perception. Older people are the prime “business” of our health care system today. The book will be my reference of choice, and I strongly recommend it for all aware nurses, physicians, and other colleagues.

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Fagin, C. M. (1966). *The effects of maternal attendance during hospitalization on the behavior of young children*. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis.

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Critical Care
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Part I

The Context for
Critical Care
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Introduction and Overview

1

Marquis D. Foreman
Koen Milisen
Terry T. Fulmer

Older adults overwhelmingly represent the majority of patients receiving critical care worldwide. In response to the health care needs of this population, in 1992 Fulmer and Walker published their groundbreaking book on critical care nursing of the elderly; one of the first of its kind. Seventeen years later, the need for a clinical reference for improving the care of older adults with critical illness is even more important. At the beginning of the 21st century, in most developed countries we find ourselves amid an explosion of older people, especially the old-old. With greater longevity, more people are growing older and dealing with chronic health conditions, many with multiple comorbid conditions, which creates a unique set of challenges as much for the care provided as for the complexity of that care. Nurses and associated health professionals must consider the usual physiologic changes that accompany aging, the frequent comorbid conditions that exist in this population, the interaction among these factors, and the treatment provided. Here, expertise in geriatric care is a must. Although efforts to prepare for the graying of the world's population began in the 1960s, now, early in the 21st century, clearly these efforts have fallen short—the number of health care providers trained to care for older adults is gravely insufficient. Nowhere is this insufficiency more evident than in critical care. As a result, in a 2008 report

from the Institute of Medicine (IOM), John Rowe suggested that all health care providers must become competent in the care of older adults. To that end, this book was written.

This volume presents the collective thinking of international experts who are striving to address current questions regarding how to better provide critical care to older adults. We have organized the content into 26 chapters arranged in four parts. In all but a few of these chapters, you find the state of the science organized around a real-life case study, which is intended to provide application of the ideas presented to the real world and to bring these ideas to life. This structure enables the book to serve as a reference on major clinical issues for nurses working at the forefront in providing care to critically ill older adults and their families: from nurses working in critical care and step-down units to nurses in trauma and emergency departments. Nurse educators for all degree levels, interdisciplinary team members, and researchers will find this book of great use because it highlights gaps in knowledge with regard to the care of critically ill older adults.

Here is a brief look at the material covered in this book. Part I: The Context for Critical Care Nursing of Older Adults, is comprised of four chapters. This chapter Introduction and Overview, written by Foreman, Milisen, and Fulmer, describes the volume's intent.

Chapter 2: Standards of Practice for Gerontological and Critical Care Nursing, written by Kleinpell, presents an overview of standards of practice for geriatric nursing care. One of the challenges here is that there are a number of standards in use that are presented by several august groups: the American Nurses Association, the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, and the Emergency Nurses Association, among others. Kleinpell describes how these standards interface to complement care of critically ill older adults, and highlights resources available to guide care of this patient population.

Chapter 3: The Critical Care Environment, by Tullmann, Hawkes, and Enfield, accentuates the need to appropriately modify the intensive care unit (ICU) environment to promote or preserve functional ability for the older adult population. They recommend successful strategies for an optimal physical, interpersonal, and social milieu, leading to a more healing environment for older adults in critical care.

Chapter 4: Patient Safety: Safety and quality are the mantra now and will be for the foreseeable future until we can prove to the public that "never" events are no longer detectable. In 2009, The National Quality Forum published its safe practices and set a "blueprint" for the way in which organizations should improve safety and quality of care for the patients they serve. This chapter, which is written by Dillworth and Fulmer, reflects the standards and practices of that document (Hughes, 2008; Institute of Medicine, 2000). The chapter addresses key areas for safety and provides a lexicon of resources for practicing nurses as they strive to eliminate error for the benefit of the critically ill older patient.

Part II: Social Aspects of Critical Care Nursing of Older Adults has seven chapters beginning with chapter 5: Ethical Decision Making. In this chapter, Mitty discusses central aspects of the approach of care for critically ill older individuals within a framework of caring and shared decision making. Who should receive care? Who should pay? When should care be withdrawn or, in fact, at what point should new care regimens be discontinued? All these are serious issues that are likely to overwhelm the health care system unless careful, proactive thinking evolves.