The Health Care Assistant-Registered Nurse Dyad; a new concept of team

Rachael Carroll
Personal history

- Mental health nurse – 24 years
- MSc Management and Leadership 2012 – Sheffield Hallam
- New challenge – Research fellow
- De Montfort University, Leicester
- Adult wards
- PhD opportunity
- HCAs – Band 2
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Background

- Role – washes, feeding, pressure area monitoring, clinical observations, other nursing support
- Wards - four bays, a central nurses station, side rooms, etc
- HCA based in a bay with a RN for the 12.5 hour shift
Context

▪ Over 400,000 ‘HCA’s in the UK
▪ 59% work in an acute general hospital (Unison 2018)
▪ HCAs provide over 60% of “hands-on care” (Willis 2015)
• HCAs not waiting for each consecutive instruction …

• … autonomous?

• Not able to explain how they knew what to do
Ethnography – a study of people and culture

Focused on role of the HCA

4 wards in 1 hospital
  – 2 assessment and 2 medical
• Observations followed immediately by interviews
• 148 hours observations.
• 108 interviews.
Intrigued

- Bays restricted their ability to work as a whole nursing team
I asked her how she felt about being part of a team and she said “well, the nurse I am working with today...” (Field notes)
Dyad; a team of two people

(the smallest team possible)
Findings

- Shared team goal

HCA-RN Dyad
- Form
- Function
HCA-RN Dyad; Form

- Pre-shift preconceptions and ‘gelling’
- Hierarchical differences
- Physical isolation
- Concentrated relationships
HCA-RN Dyad Function

- Joining and separating;
- Non-dependent working
- Inter-dependent working
Joining and Separating as a HCA-RN dyadic team

Non-dependent working

HCA

RN

Inter-dependent working
Non-dependent working

- Routine scaffolding
  - compulsory timed tasks,
  - mandatory flexible tasks,
  - RN requested tasks

- Relies upon RN trust
**Routine Scaffolding**

**Fills gaps between Compulsory timed tasks**

**Beginning of shift**

- **Mandatory flexible task**
- **Mandatory flexible task**

**RN requested**

**Compulsory timed tasks**

- **4 hrs**
- **8 hrs**
- **12.5 hrs**

**End of shift**

- Small diversions from the compulsory timed tasks and Mandatory flexible tasks

- Poles that provide the shift structure - can not be moved/omitted
Inter-dependent working

- Exchangeable and distinguishable roles
- Holding ‘mini-meetings’
- Beholden to the RN – asking a peer, escalating, doing it alone
- Searching for equity
HCA-RN Dyad; Form

pre-shift preconceptions and gelling

hierarchical differences,

physical isolation,

concentrated relationships

Joining and separating

Non-dependent working

Routine scaffolding

RN's trust

Inter-dependent working

Exchangeable and Distinguishable

Holding mini meetings

Beholden to RN

Searching for equity

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- HCA - the nursing team = RN that on that shift – dyad

- Joined and separated to work non-dependently and inter-dependently

- A successful dyadic team completed all of their work on time with no omissions.
Conclusion?

- Recognise the contribution of the HCA; the vital, intertwined team member to the RN

- The next story - Introduction of Nursing Associate - A triad??
Thank you

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