Clinical Question: The concern you have about your nursing unit or area of practice: Does an 8 hour RN shift versus 12 hour RN shift have a direct impact on patient safety and overall quality of care?

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<th>P:</th>
<th>Patients on an acute care unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I:</td>
<td>Nurses shifts: 8 hour shift compared to 12 hour shift</td>
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<tr>
<td>C:</td>
<td>12 hour</td>
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<td>O:</td>
<td>Increased patient safety</td>
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<td>(t)</td>
<td>*Duration of hospital stay</td>
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Search terms:

Evidence:

1. RN’s working shifts of ≥12 hours and those working overtime report lower quality and safety and significantly more care left uncompleted. Furthermore, the use of overtime to alleviate RN staffing shortages can and does add additional risk to patient safety and quality of care.


2. Shifts that were greater than 12 hours were found to be associated with poor quality of care and higher rates or uncompleted tasks/care left uncompleted.


3. “The risks of making an error were significantly increased when work shifts were longer than twelve hours, when nurses worked overtime, or when they worked more than forty hours per week. Although the occurrence of errors did not increase significantly until shift durations
Rogers, AE; Hwang, WT; Scott, LD; Aiken, LH; Dinges, DF. (2004). The working hours of hospital staff nurses and patient safety. *Health Affairs* (4):202-12. DOI: 10.1377/hlthaff.23.4.202


**Conclusion/Recommendations:**

- Have nurses work only 8 hour shifts (biggest barrier to changing staffing model are staff nurses and leaders due to being accustomed to the 12 hours, like the increase income potential and perceive they have more time off)
- Development of a comprehensive fatigue management program (nurse leaders to consider nursing staff as a limited resource, once that requires rest and respite to work and adequate recuperation time)
  - Educate staff about negative impact of fatigue, instituting duty free breaks, standardizing scheduling policies requiring 48 hours of recuperation between a night and day shift.

**Ideas/suggestions for next steps:**

- Talk to our nurse leaders and management about scheduling to see if they would consider incorporating 8 hour shifts with staff or a plan to decrease nurse fatigue. In hopes that it will help create a healthy work/team environment as well as keeping in mind patient safety.

**Identify your collaborative partners if you were to follow this through to next steps:**

Marie, Hillary, Katie