



Critical Care Follow up Clinic: Role and Relevance

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Intensive care units attempt to provide high quality of care to not only to critically ill patients but also provide support to their families during the critical illness. The intensivist spends a lot of his time in the close ICU while providing care. Follow-up ICU clinic is the concept which opens a new horizon for an intensivist from close door ICU to OPD based follow-up ICU clinics. Most of the time patients in ICUs are on mechanical ventilation with sedation with or without muscle relaxant. So interaction between health care provider and the patient are very little, and due to the immense patient load on ICU, they are discharged or transferred back to lower facility as early as possible. These ICU survivors in future visit to their primary disease specific specialty not to ICU physician and/or visit to their local physician or hospital, if needed. Sometime even patient ignore minor physical ailments and avoid to visit hospital, especially in case of older age group, minor neuropsychiatric complaints like anxiety or sleep deprivation. These are the reasons which lead the loss of follow-up by intensivist. These results in unawareness among intensivist about post discharge issues which an ICU survivor faces. These clinics are the place which provides opportunity to review the impact of critical care provided during illness. These follow-up can delineate the effect of ICU environment on wellbeing of the ICU survivors, their physical quality of life as well as mental health after discharge. We can assess the impact on their social and professional life too. Family members of the critically ill patients are also an essential part of contemporary health care delivery in intensive care unit. Not only the ICU survivors but their family members are also exhausted during the prolonged critical illness. They also have effect on their physical, mental and emotional health as well as their on economic conditions.

There are reports in literature that these follow up clinics for ICU survivor, originates mainly from European countries with one Australian report [1] and two reports from the United States [2]. Lasiter, *et al.* [3] concluded that though ICU follow-up clinics have existed for decades. Rohr, *et al.* [4] who introduces the first ICU follow-up clinic in Germany to improve the follow up care of ICU survivors.

Opportunities

After their discharge the ICU survivor can develop some minor complaints to conditions which require readmission to ICU. These follow-up clinics may prove advantageous in early identification of risk factors which may leads to readmission. These risk factor may be due to reasons for which patient the patients was admitted first time in ICU or their associated comorbidities may complicate the condition that may results in readmission. By identifying the determinants of readmission and the associated risk factor, early intervention can avoid the progression and future readmission and thus cut the expenditure on health care. Here in Follow-up clinic an intensivist can counsel the patients and their families, provide consultation and refer them to other specialty according to the need. Patient's outcome and recovery along with family satisfaction is a key performance measure for ICUs. Follow up clinic is the place where we can assess both of them. These performance measures helps to improve quality health care provided in ICUs. Follow-up ICU clinics are the expansion of the horizon of critical care to acknowledge the sufferings of ICU survivors, to improve and prolong the life after prolonged critical illness and also to acknowledge physical, psychological and cognitive problems, their impact on the life style. It gives opportunity to understand the need and deliver high quality critical care to ICU survivors.

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