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Approach to safe and efficient nursing staffing in your ED: Challenges over the years

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Getting staffing levels wrong in inpatient setting in the hospital has been linked to excess mortality and poor patient outcomes. Having safe nurse staffing levels in the emergency department is however even more challenging because patient demand, patient acuity and time of day can be variable. This review investigates and describes the challenges facing emergency department senior nurses/managers with regards to safely staffing their departments. The review consists of: Defining safe staffing in the Emergency Department; outcomes associated with poor nurse staffing levels; challenges facing Emergency Department Senior Nurses when it comes to staffing; key drivers associated with staffing; a review of common staffing tools used by Emergency Department Senior Nurses; and approaches to safe staffing.

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