

# Why BSN?

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The question continually discussed in nursing and nursing education since the initial 1965 American Nurses Association position on nursing education can be succinctly stated as 'Why BSN?' The comprehensive question is 'What is the major evidence and rationale why all nurses should steadfastly support the 2010 IOM Future Nursing, Leading Change, Advancing Health report recommendation to increase the percentage of BSN RNs to 80% by 2020?' Furthermore, it should also be asked why nurses should expect all ADN and diploma nurses to achieve BSN minimal continued professional development.

The purpose of this article is to briefly summarize the major evidence and rationale for why patients need BSN RNs:

- 1) The ethical duty of the nurse is first and foremost to the patient; it is not to the nurse, nor the educational or health care system (Pierce, 2010).
- 2) There is a need for increased education for all nurses because with the increasing complexity of health care, the patient requires a more educated nurse in order to deliver effective and safe care. (2010 Policy Statement of Tri-Council Nursing; 2010 IOM Future of Nursing Report; 2013 AZ Action Coalition Education-Practice Collaborative Task Force Assumption)



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3) The evidence indicates with higher percentages of BSN RNs there are improved patient outcomes, including decreased patient mortality and decreased failure to rescue rates.

- A) Aiken (2003) found a 10% increase in the proportion of nurses holding a bachelor's degree was associated with a 5% decrease in both the likelihood of patients dying within 30 days of admission and the odds of failure to rescue.
  - B) Estabrooks (2005) found the hospitals with a higher proportion of baccalaureate-prepared nurse were associated with lower rate of 30-day patient mortality.
  - C) Tourganeau (2007) found a 10% increase in the proportion of baccalaureate-prepared nurses was associated with 9 fewer deaths for every 1,000 discharged patients.
  - D) Aiken (2008) reconfirmed 2003 study finding with each 10% increase in the proportion of nurses with a BSN was associated with a 4% decrease in risk of death.
  - E) Friesse (2008) found hospitals whose nurses had more advanced educational preparation had lower mortality rates and higher education was associated with lower failure to rescue rates.
- 4) The evidence indicates BSN RNs have higher levels of job satisfaction, which is positively associated with nurse retention (Rambur, 2003).
  - 5) NCSBN define the RN-NCLEX passing standard as 'the minimum ability required to safely and effectively practice nursing at the entry-level.' Therefore, the RN-NCLEX pass rates are similar for all three nursing education program graduates because the examination does not have the ability to discriminate between graduates. (NCSBN, 2010; AACN, 2010).

The time is now for nurses to unite in our major ethical duty as patient advocate and steadfastly support the need for nurses to achieve a BSN in order to provide effective and safe patient care.

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