**Nurses' Attitudes, competency, and Perceptions of the National Institute of Health stroke Scale**

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**Background:** Stroke is a major cause of disability and death worldwide. Stroke victims suffer from stroke related deficits in motor, sensory, vision, language, cognition, and affect domains. The National Institute of Health Stroke Scale (NIHSS) is the standard of care for ongoing assessments of stroke patients. Nurses are the most frequent users of this scale. Unfortunately, nurses are somewhat reluctant to adopt and use this tool.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to identify nurses’ attitudes toward and perceived competence in using the NIHSS as an assessment tool, and their perceptions of the usability of the NIHSS as built into an electronic medical record system (EMR).

**Methods:** This quality improvement project was conducted in a Neuroscience Intensive Care unit of a comprehensive stroke-certified tertiary hospital. This project enrolled 47 eligible nurses who volunteered to participate. Survey design was used to identify nurses’ attitudes, competencies, and perceived usability of the NIHSS.

**Results:** The results showed that the majority of nurses felt competent in performing the NIHSS assessments. Nurses’ overall attitude toward the NIHSS as an assessment tool was neutral. Their perception of its usability in the EMR to document the stroke assessment was also neutral.

**Conclusion:** The study showed that nurses’ attitudes toward the NIHSS as an assessment tool as well as their perceived usability of the NIHSS could be improved. If specific areas of concern to nurses can be addressed, nurses may be motivated to use the NIHSS an evidence based tool and integrate it into their practice.