

## Background/Introduction

In the literature, the prevalence of diarrhea in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) has been reported to be 3.3–78% [1]. The problem is significant to patients and also increases workload burden for ICU staff [2]. Unfortunately, research on this topic is very limited [3-6]; we found one single study on the impact that diarrhea has on nursing staff workload [2]. Therefore, we conducted a retrospective chart review to describe the prevalence and impact of diarrhea in our organization. For the purposes of this study, we equated diarrhea with type 7 stools as defined in the Bristol Stool Form Scale [7].

In January of 2018, we developed a bowel management guideline and rolled out the associated protocol in a multi-faceted implementation process which included a variety of educational strategies. Toward promoting the use of the tool in practice, we sought to assess staff perceptions of the resources and time needed to manage diarrhea and bowel function with a survey that was administered to ICU staff in a 600 bed, level one trauma center.

The purpose of this poster is to describe the findings from a survey to assess perceptions of workload after the implementation of the new bowel management guidelines.

## Methods

We reviewed the literature and found a prior questionnaire measuring staff opinions of the burden of diarrhea and workload. [2]

The survey tool was translated and adapted, with the author's permission, from French to English, and aligned to our institutional practices by a multi-professional team.

The finalized survey included 16 multiple-choice questions and one open-ended comment section. (Figure 1). Paper copies of the survey were distributed to the staff between January 15 and February 6, 2019. The collected data were analyzed statistically.

Surveys were completed and returned by 76 out of 195 ICU staff, corresponding to a 40% response rate.

Figure 1. Survey tool

## Results

### Staff Characteristics

- respondents were mostly RNs (78%) and Clinical Nursing Assistants (CNAs, 11%).
- almost half (49%) had < 4 years of work experience; another 24% reported >15 years of work experience.
- majority of the respondents (76%) worked full-time.

### Guidelines: Awareness and Use

- over half (68%) were aware of the new guidelines
- 64% were using these on a daily basis.
- staff felt moderately comfortable (49% positive) using the guidelines
- 50% reported confidence in using the guidelines.

Table 1. Respondents' Background

Characteristics	N	(%)
<b>Profession:</b>		
RN	59	78%
CNA	8	11%
PCT	4	5%
PT	1	1%
Other	4	5%
<b>Years Worked:</b>		
<4 years	35	49%
5-9	12	17%
10-14	7	10%
15+	17	24%
<b>Work Status:</b>		
Full Time	57	76%
Part Time	10	13%
Per Diem	8	11%
<b>Guideline Use:</b>		
Comfortable	68	5.49 (3.04)
Confident	65	5.46 (2.62)

Note: PCT=Patient Care Technicians PT=Physical Therapists

### Burden of Diarrhea

Almost half (48%) reported that over the last month they had been confronted with diarrhea two or more times per week, and estimated that they spend about 30% of their workday cleaning diarrhea. Respondents reported that more than two caregivers were needed to clean diarrhea 70% of the time and 69% stated that this help was most often available. Staff felt frustration from cleaning diarrhea about 50% of the time. (See Figure 2.)

Good bowel management was considered important or very important by a majority of staff (96%) to the progress of ICU patients. The perceptions of importance were stronger among CNAs (94%) than RNs (77%) and also among those staff with fewer than 4 years (86%) or more than 15 years of work experience (87%).

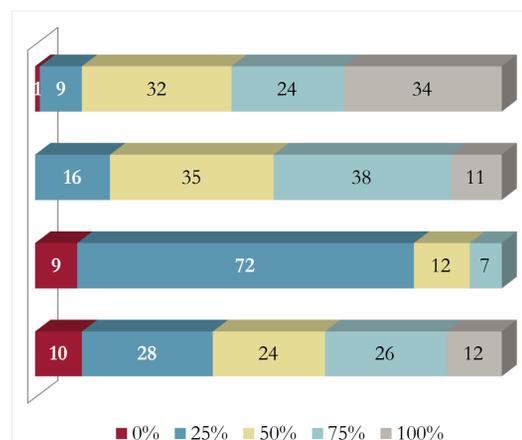
### Figure 2. Perceptions of Workload

How often are more than 2 caregivers needed in cleaning type 7 stool?

When you need caregivers, how often are they available?

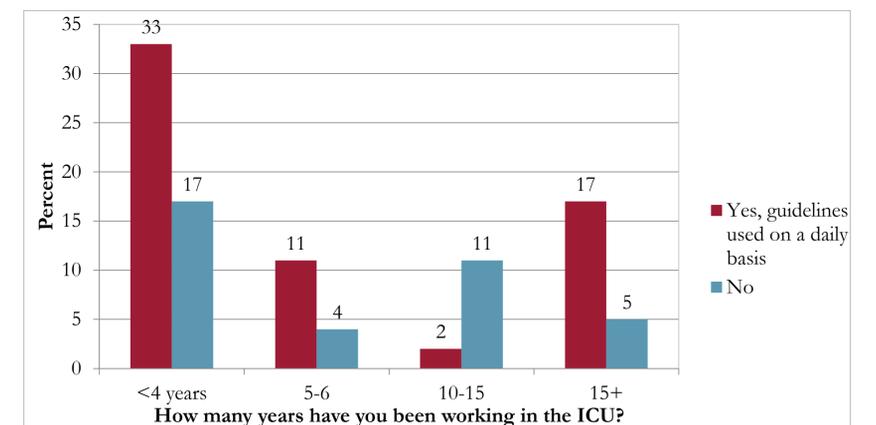
What percent of your day is spent cleaning type 7 stool?

How often do you get frustrated or deflated from cleaning up type 7 stool?



## Results (cont.)

Figure 3. Use of the new guidelines on a daily basis and years of work experience



The new guidelines were used on a daily basis by staff with fewer than 4 years (33%) and those who had over 15 years of work experience (17%) (Figure 3). Over half of the staff (68%) reported that they had enough resources to manage type 7 stool and that there was enough collaboration (79%) with providers regarding daily bowel management.

## Discussion and Conclusions

Interestingly, we found that the perceptions of importance of bowel management were stronger in the newer RNs and CNAs and the most experienced RNs and CNAs. Those with years of experience greater than 4 and less than 15 found bowel management was still important, but to a lesser degree.

Our results highlight the importance of evaluating acceptance of a bowel management guideline, when staff have been involved in the development and implementation process. This includes also perceptions of the workload and experienced burden caused by diarrhea.

## References

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