

# Improving COVID-19 Response: Training Strategies for Clinical Nursing Staff in a General Ward Setting

Hsin-Yi Lin

Department of Nursing, China Medical University Hospital

## Background

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges for hospitals in Taiwan, particularly in managing outbreaks within general wards. This study aimed to improve staff preparedness and safety through training strategies amid the pandemic.

## Methods

Plan for nursing staff to participate in education and training on caring for COVID-19 patients, including 1. Respiratory infectious disease awareness testing, 2. N95 respirator fit testing, and 3. Proper donning and doffing of protective equipment. In addition, before entering the ward for clinical operations, leaders will help confirm the integrity of protective equipment.

## Results

Pre-training scores indicated a lack of preparedness among staff, with notable improvements observed post-training: awareness scores increased from 65.0 to 92.0 points, N95 fit test scores improved from 50.0 to 100.0 points, and proficiency in donning and doffing PPE increased from 60.0 to 100.0 points. Despite admitting 114 COVID-19 patients, effective measures reduced cross-infections, with a waiting time for transfer to isolation wards ranging from 1 to 3 days. Among the 28 nursing staff in the unit, 16 were diagnosed with COVID-19 due to caring for patients, and 8 of them had never suffered from COVID-19.

## Conclusions

The study underscores the importance of staff training and safety in pandemic response. Enhanced knowledge and skills in respiratory infectious diseases and proper PPE usage are crucial for mitigating risks. Leadership oversight and preparedness are vital for ensuring staff safety and patient care. The findings emphasize the need for hospitals to prioritize education, training, and adequate resources to address emergencies effectively.

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中國醫藥大學附設醫院  
China Medical University Hospital