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Almost one-third of intensive care unit (ICU) patients are obese. Obese patients pose a unique challenge for preventing skin breakdown, healing wounds, and preventing complications of surgery and prolonged immobility. Yet little research to date has been done to study the effects of obesity on skin integrity and wound healing in this patient population. This article discusses common skin conditions and wound complications associated with obese patients and general treatment guidelines as they pertain to the critically ill patient.	
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Achieving pain control in critically ill patients is a challenging problem for the health care team, which becomes more challenging in morbidly obese patients. Obese patients may experience drug malabsorption and distribution, which may lead to either subtherapeutic or toxic drug levels. To	

manage pain effectively for the critically ill obese patient, nurses must have an understanding of how obesity alters a patient's physiologic response to injury and illness. In addition, nurses must be knowledgeable about physiologic pain mechanisms, types and manifestations of pain, differing patterns of drug absorption and distribution, pharmacokinetic properties of analgesic medications, and pain management strategies. This article explores factors affecting pharmacokinetics in obese patients, trends in pain management, and treatment strategies for the obese patient.

Sedation Considerations for the Nonintubated Obese Patient in Critical Care

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Mark Welliver and Michele Bednarzyk

Sedation of the obese critical care patient presents unique challenges that include altered respiratory function and a predisposition to respiratory suppression and airway obstruction. Sedative drugs have pronounced effects on obese patients. Knowledge of the anatomic and physiologic changes associated with obesity, airway management, and sedation agents better prepares one to care for these patients safely and effectively.

Providing Nutrition to Critically Ill Obese Adults: Use of the Nursing Process

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Susan Smith and Kathleen Fedyszen

Caring for obese critically ill patients is not always the same as caring for critically ill patients who are not obese. Fortunately, nurses have many resources available to them to guide them in this process. However, research that specifically addresses the needs of obese critically ill patients is still lacking in many areas and should be considered as potential areas to develop evidence-based practices.

Impact of Obesity on Care of Postoperative Coronary Bypass Patients

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Barbara Leeper

Obesity has become a major health problem in the United States and is well known to be a risk factor for the development of cardiovascular disease. Many clinicians perceive obesity, particularly severe or morbid obesity, to be associated with increased risk for mortality and morbidity following coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery. This article provides a review of the literature related to mortality and morbidity, including the impact of diabetes, risk for acute respiratory failure, and sternal wound infection associated with obese patients undergoing CABG surgery. Implications for nursing practice are addressed with recommendations for practice in this patient population.

Trauma in Obese Patients: Implications for Nursing Practice

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Sherry N. VanHoy and V. Tereceita Laidlow

Recently, the impact of obesity on the outcomes of trauma patients has been the focus of several investigations. There have been several studies

addressing the impact of obesity on trauma patients. These studies have explicated the impact of obesity on negative outcomes of trauma patients. Several studies have identified a relationship between obesity and injury pattern, increased complications in outcomes related to surgical procedures, and increase mortality and morbidity rates in obese trauma patients. However, the literature in nursing management in this patient population is virtually nonexistent and vague. The purpose of this article is to delineate the nursing implications of obesity in trauma patients and to provide guidelines for care of obese trauma patients.

Obesity-related Risks and Prevention Strategies for Critically Ill Adults 391

Margaret McAtee and Rebecca J. Personett

In America today, more than one third of adults are obese. Increasingly, obese patients are admitted to critical care units. Critical care nurses must have additional knowledge and skills to identify health risks to obese patients and implement interventions to prevent untoward problems. Critical care nurses are also at risk when taking care of obese patients. The purpose of this article is to identify risks to both patients and nurses and to provide recommendations to address those risks.

The Impact of Obesity on Critical Care Resource Use and Outcomes 403

Chris Winkelman, Beverly Maloney, and Janet Kloos

Obese patients in the ICU present unique challenges to the health care team and specific challenges to nurses. This article reviews the science and art of resource use for obese patients in the ICU. Staff nurses and advanced practice nurses can make important contributions in evaluating optimal resource use and improving outcomes in this population of vulnerable patients.

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