

# Fewer patient deaths after surgery in hospitals known for good nursing care

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Patients treated in magnet hospitals (specially designated for their nursing excellence) had 14 percent lower odds of death than those in non-magnet hospitals in a four-state study of 564 hospitals led by the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. The magnet designation, determined by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, recognizes high-quality patient care, high levels of nurse education, and nursing innovation.

"Even controlling for differences in nursing, hospital, and patient characteristics, surgical patients fared better in magnet hospitals," said lead author Dr. Matthew D. McHugh, a [public health policy](#) expert at Penn Nursing. "The better outcomes can be attributed in large part to investments in highly qualified and highly educated nurses, and practice environments supportive of high-quality nursing care."

Starting in 1994 with Penn Nursing research, studies on magnet hospitals have shown they yield lower rates of patient death. Ongoing research points to magnet hospitals' having "higher levels of nurse satisfaction, less nurse burnout, lower patient fall rates, and lower mortality among very [low birthweight](#) infants," wrote Dr. McHugh and Penn Nursing co-authors in *Medical Care*. "Magnet hospitals have reputations for being good places for nurses to work. Our findings reinforce that better [work environments](#) for nurses are the distinguishing factor between magnet and non-magnet hospitals and are the key to better [patient outcomes](#)."

The number of magnet-recognized hospitals in the U.S. is at about 400—about 8 percent of hospitals nationally. This study took place in California, Florida, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey—four of the nation's largest states accounting for more than 20 percent of hospitalizations annually. Nearly 100,000 [registered nurses](#) took part in this study.

"The magnet recognition program is not the only

means of improving the work environment, but it may provide a replicable blueprint for doing so, to the benefit of nurses and patients," said Dr. McHugh. "Hospitals that have earned magnet status have seen improvement in patient outcomes, suggesting that the process of applying for and retaining magnet recognition, and the networking opportunities that come with magnet recognition, may promote continuing quality improvement and organizational innovation."

#### More information:

[journals.lww.com/lww-medicalca...e/pages/default.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/lww-medicalca...e/pages/default.aspx)

Provided by University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

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