

Strap

Review

Substrap

Patient care

Standfirst [approx. 150 characters including spaces, for online only]

This review highlights the significant gap in empirical research regarding the holistic implications of intensive care patient diaries on patients and their families.

Keywords [5 maximum]

Intensive Care Units; Diaries; Family; Nursing; Communication; Therapeutic relationship

Head [approx 70 characters including spaces]

The impact of ICU patient diaries on the relationship between patients and their relatives: A narrative review.

In this article... [3 points, 60-80 characters per line including spaces]

- **A specific view of the impact on relationships when utilising diaries in ICU.**
- **The challenges and benefits of this low-cost intervention.**
- **Recommendations for further synthesis of research and practice.**

Key points [3-5 points, 100 characters including spaces]

- Diaries in ICU are increasingly becoming a low-cost means of supporting patients and their families with post-ICU adjustment.
- The use of diaries in the ICU aid the construction of a shared story between its contributors and recipients by helping the understanding and interpretation of fragmented memories.
- Engagement with diaries from both the recipient and the contributors has a significant emotional impact that needs to be explored further.
- Diaries are a low cost effective tool for communication between all parties, allowing for information to be accessible and easily understood.

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Abstract [50-100 words. No citations or abbreviations]

Patient diaries are a low-cost intervention designed to help reduce the impact of post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression following an admission to the intensive care unit. There is an emerging evidence base regarding the benefits and challenges of patient diaries and practice which would benefit from its synthesis.

Citation

Jordan J, Whiifin C (2023) The impact of ICU patient diaries on the relationship between patients and their relatives: A narrative review. Nursing Times;

Quickfact

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[main article]

Introduction

Patient diaries are a low-cost intervention designed to help address the growing body of evidence showing patients can suffer from post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression following an admission to the intensive care unit (Gazzato et al, 2022). Diaries were first introduced in the 1980's in Denmark, and their use spread quickly to Sweden and Norway (Jones et al, 2010). The UK first reported their use in the 1990's and they have emerged in other countries since Diaries have gained in popularity as a tool to help patients gain a sense of coherence about their time in ICU. Due to the common treatments received in ICU such as sedation, patients often have significant memory gaps or suffer from episodes of delirium (Aitken et al, 2013). Patient diaries are designed to be written in everyday language and often contain entries from the nurses, relatives, and other healthcare professionals. Daily diary entries that describe the condition of the patient, procedures they have undergone, everyday events, and descriptions of their environment may help patients orientate themselves to the experience that they may not fully remember post-discharge (Pattinson et al, 2019).

The evidence base for the use of patient diaries in ICU is increasing. Studies suggest these play a role in improved patient outcomes (Aitken et al, 2013; Ullman et al, 2015; Sun et al, 2021; Zisopoulos, Triliva & Roussi, 2022). Furthermore, studies have identified diaries may also have a positive impact on relatives and their mental wellbeing (Jones et al, 2012; Nydahl et al, 2014; Teece & Baker, 2017). However, to date there is limited evidence of this emerging evidence base focussing on the specific view to patients and relatives' usage of diaries within the intensive care environment. Given the increasing use of ICU diaries a review is therefore timely and of relevance to contemporary nursing practice. Therefore, the aim of this review is to explore the use of intensive care patient diaries on the patients and their relatives.

Methods

This narrative review was guided by the step-by-step approach described by Cronin et al (2008). Steps included a systematic search of the databases, selection of relevant papers, critical appraisal, data extraction and thematic analysis.

Systematic search:

Five databases were searched for peer reviewed published literature. Specifically, these were; CINAHL; Embase; Pubmed, Medline, Psycinfo. Grey literature was also searched for using the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) evidence search. Search terms aimed to bring together key concepts including: Diary; intensive care; patients; relatives; relationship. Terms were developed using a PIO framework to include all related synonyms.

		Key concepts	Synonyms
P	Population, Patient, Problem	Patients and Relatives in Intensive care	intensive care unit; ICU; critical care; critical care unit; patient; family member; partner; loved one; next of kin; spouse; significant other
I	Intervention	Intensive care diaries	patient diaries; intensive care diaries; diary; diaries
O	Outcome	Impact on relationship	perceptions; attitudes; views; experience; reflection; beliefs

Table 1: Systematic search terms

Selection of relevant papers:

Inclusion and exclusion were based on pragmatic principles such as time and resources and included English only publications, and publications from within the past 10 years. Ten papers were identified that were relevant to the review (see figure 1).

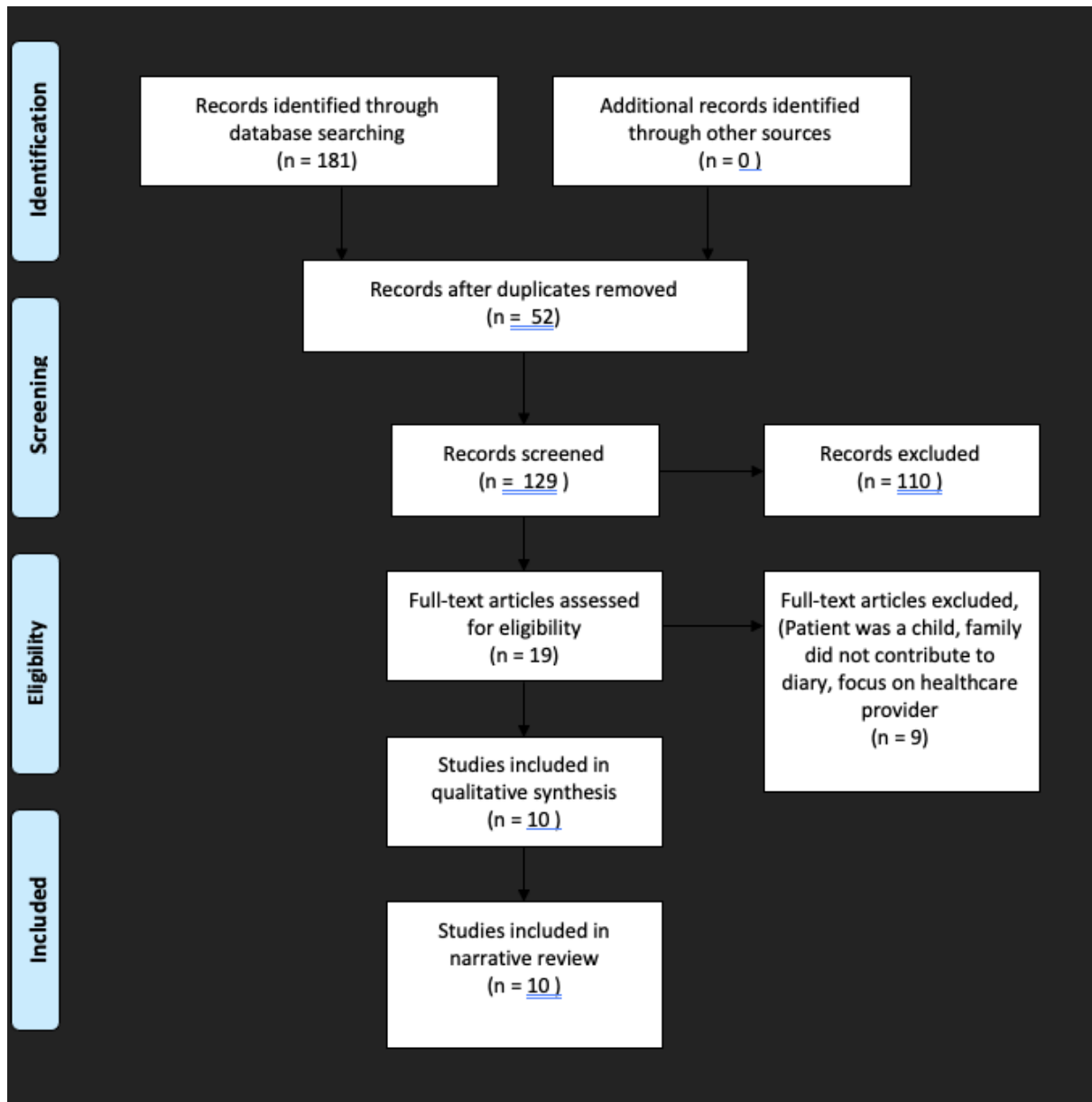


Figure 1: Flowchart of selected papers adapted from PRISMA (Moher 2009)

Critical appraisal:

This review used the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2018) tool to appraise the strengths and limitations of each paper and not inform in-out decisions.

Data extraction:

Once articles were reviewed, data were extracted using a matrix of evidence (see table 2)

Author date country of origin	Questions Hypotheses Aim	Methodology	Data collection	Sample & Analysis strategy	Key Findings (Results)	Limitations	Conclusions Implications for practice
Johansson et al (2014) Sweden	To explore a family members' experiences with keeping a diary during a sick relative's stay in the ICU.	Hermeneutic interview study	Audio taped interviews ranging from 35-70 minutes, conducted as a participative conversation.	Relative or close friend/partner; 18+; speak Swedish. Sample size:11 Geanellos (2005) model.	Form of connection between them and their loved one. Guidance needed for implementation of diaries	One of the authors is also a nurse and therefore has a level of pre-understanding of the subject.	Involving family members may be therapeutic. A need for practice guidelines for implementation
Engstrom, Grip & Hamren (2009) Sweden	Describe peoples' experience of a personal diary written	Qualitative	Qualitative audio recorded personal narrative interviews	9 people out of 22 who were discharged at least 18 month	Aroused strong feelings amongst participants who could	Small number of participants	Diaries can be used as a tool to add coherence to ICU stay.

	when they were critically ill and receiving care in an ICU.			previously; 18+. 4 men and 5 women responded. Qualitative content analysis	see the long term benefits.	Conducted in Swedish and then translated to English –the process could affect the findings.	More utilisation in ICU follow-ups.
Nielson et al (2018) Denmark	To explore patients' and relatives' perceptions and use of a diary written by relatives for the critically ill patient.	Hermeneutic-phenomenology	Dyadic interviews 3-6 months post discharge & 8-16 months post discharge	10 critically ill patients and 13 relatives. All 18+ and all patients had undergone mechanical ventilation. Ricoeur's theory of interpretation	A strengthened relationship between patient and relative.	Dyadic interviews- 1 person may dominate another.	The need for nurses to know when is appropriate to use the diary and for support for relatives on when to share the diary.
Nielsen & Angel (2016)	Exploring relatives interaction with other	Hermeneutic phenomenology	Interviews	7 relatives who wrote in the diary of 6 patients	Authoring the diary could be both a	No input regarding	Further research required into the impact

Denmark	relatives when writing a diary for the critically ill.			who survived. Ricoeur's theory of interpretation	powerful position in shaping the story and a burden.	patient's perspective as to who should author their diary. Majority female participants.	on relationships including the patients' perspective.
Ewens et al (2013) Australia	To explore survivors and family members' perceptions and utilisation of diaries following discharge from hospital.	Qualitative	Qualitative descriptive study using surveys at 3, 6 and 12 months post discharge.	32 participants were eligible – 18 took part. 7 completed all 3 surveys; 6 completed the first 2; 5 completed the first survey only. Qualitative descriptive.	The diary helped them make sense of their time and reinforced the human connection.	Small sample, low response rate and the use of a single site. No demographic data collected	Whilst participants read the diary they did not necessarily utilise the diary and continue to use it.

O' Gara & Pattison (2016) UK	Exploration of the impact of diaries on critical care patients around the UK in order to describe the long term effects of patient diaries.	Qualitative	Qualitative interviews using principles of grounded theory via telephone and email.	8 people in the UK who had previously had critical care diaries in the past 1-3 years. Coding and grounded theory.	Fill gaps for the patients memory. Patients needed support when first receiving the diary to understand the events that took place.	Self selected participants who replied to adverts on CCU sites. Small number of participants.	Guidance and support is needed for the patient before receiving the diary and as a follow up. Guidance on when to use the diary and who for.
Garrouste-Orgeas et al (2014) UK	To investigate the families' experience with reading and writing in patient diaries kept by both family and staff	Qualitative ?grounded theory	32 semi-structured interviews	32 interviews of relatives of 26 patients Grounded theory	Diaries area holistic tool. Diaries made family members aware of their valuable role	Family dynamics were not considered.	Diary can play an important role in improving the wellbeing of ICU patient families.
Egerod & Bagger (2010) Denmark	Explore patients' experience and perceptions	Qualitative	Focus groups	4 participants, 3 male and 1 female representing	Patients felt that the diary alone provided incomplete	Small sample. Findings not	Diaries need to be used in conjunction with other

	of receiving intensive care diaries.			the intervention and control group in a previous study. Thematic analysis	information, but was aid to helping them complete their story.	immediately transferable but provide more understanding.	information such as hospital charts, relative accounts etc.
Strandberg, Vesterlund & Engstrom (2017) Sweden	Describe the contents of a patients diary and its significance for persons cared for in an ICU.	Qualitative	8 telephone interviews and 1 face-to-face interview.	18+; been treated in ICU for at least 72 hours; had read their diaries. Qualitative content analysis	Patients felt confirmed and valued as a person. Guidelines need to be developed to encourage relatives and nurses to write in the diary.	Most interviews carried out over the phone. Some people actively choose to not remember trauma.	Nurses allocating time to write in the diary will reduce gaps and prevent patients having missing elements.
Nielsen, Egerod & Angel (2019) Denmark	To explore patients perceptions of an ICU diary written by relatives including	Hermeneutic – phenomenological	Interviews that took place in the participants home	10 participants from 2 regional ICU in Denmark. Ricoeur's theory of	Diaries helped them to understand their time in the ICU. There was a risk of	All diaries written by female relatives. Inconsi	Memory recollection. Creates a shared sense of understanding of the trauma

	pictures by staff			interpretation	overwhelming the patients	stent diary styles. Dyadic interviewing may limit or oppress participants.	experience by all parties.
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Table 2: Matrix of Evidence

Thematic analysis:

Using the six-stage process of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006) the findings of each papers were coded and categorised. From these three interpretive themes were identified from the papers. Rigour was increased through regular supervisor meetings and oversight of the methodological process.

Findings

Three themes were identified from the evidence base; An aid to constructing a shared story; An emotionally demanding task; A communication tool.

Theme One: An Aid to Constructing a Shared Story:

An Aid to Constructing a Shared Story consisted of two sub-themes: Understanding and confirming memories, and, conflict and negative emotions about gaps in the diary. Through these subthemes the role of diaries in the creation of a shared story is examined.

Understanding and Confirming Memories: This sub-theme focused on the way in which diaries are used to help patients piece together fragmented memories. Studies

showed how diaries were a useful tool to confirm memories and in the subsequent understanding of these (Egerod & Bagger, 2010 & Strandberg et al, 2017).

In a study by Engstrom et al (2009) participants described the diary as useful but also describe the entries as fictional stories about someone else and therefore still struggled to connect the content with their own experience.

‘it is a rather horrible to read that I have reacted and showed feelings even though I don’t remember it.... You start to wonder if it is all true and I’ve asked again and again if it was that way and, well, it seems to agree..’ (P.63).

This disconnection from reality provided an opportunity to discuss events with family members and provided a bridge between the memories they lost. However, memory gaps were also present for family members themselves who said the diaries helped them to recall a more accurate representation of the ICU period (Johansson et al (2014). Nielsen et al (2018) reported that by the patient and relative reading the diary together they could develop a shared interpretation of the experience of being in ICU. Co-creating these memories was considered a way to strengthen relationships following ICU recovery.

Conflict and negative emotions about gaps in the diary: This sub-theme considered the impact of inconsistencies in diary entries, such as missing entries, and a lack of in-depth information. Egerod & Bagger (2010) and Strandberg et al (2017) found a lack of continuity in the entries or entries lacked an expected level of detail and patients found this to be frustrating. Johansson et al (2014) and Garrouste-Orgeas et al (2014) also found that relatives tended to favour positive entries, avoiding those which may contain fear or anxiety about prognosis.

“...sometimes he’s not doing very well and then it’s not easy to write that he’s not doing well because then we’re not feeling well either – so we just write ‘you’re not doing well today, as we hope you’ll be better’...” (P.7)

This conscious muting of diary entries exacerbated the inconsistencies and caused relatives to feel guilt at failing to keep a detailed record and how this may be interpreted by the patient when they read it.

“A disadvantage might be that you feel [like], “I was not there [stresses] on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday’. What does my love mean then? Where was I on these four days?” (P.246)

These gaps have been attributed to relatives feeling burdened by the responsibility of having to complete these (Egerod & Bagger, 2010 & Strandberg et al, 2017).

Theme Two: An Emotionally Demanding Task

The theme; was generated through two the sub-themes; The emotional impact on their loved ones; An emotional toll taken on participants when engaging with the diary. These sub-themes describe the negative and positive consequences of keeping a diary in ICU.

The Emotional Impact on patients and relatives: This sub-theme focusses on how diaries were used to aid all relatives to understand the emotional impact of the ICU experience. Engstrom et al (2009) highlighted how diary entries enabled patients to not only understand their own experience but also to understand the impact of their illness on their loved ones.

“Even though, deep down, I know I’d experienced all of what I read...I wasn’t upset about that part, about it happening to me. What made me feel so sad was that all these words had been written by the two people I loved most in the world. The utter realisation of what they had been through whilst I was so ill hit me hard” (P.4).

Similarly, Nielsen et al (2019) also found diaries gave patients insight into their relative’s suffering during their illness. However, Strandberg et al (2017) also reported that participants felt an emotional toll from engaging in these accounts:

“....So I see their suffering in the text...it’s still hard to read. It’s not unmanageable but it’s....so there were quite a few tears” (P.34).

The impact of patient diaries on the relationship between relatives was also explored in Nielsen & Angek (2016). This phenomenon has not been widely investigated and highlights how family dynamics have a significant impact on the narrative of the diary when co-authored. The study highlighted instances in which the family members were not aware of the emotional impact of the experience on others:

“I actually think he [the son] expressed some feelings where you thought...oh my God, do you think like that too?” (P.5)

Despite these advantages Nielsen & Angel (2016) also found that authorship and responsibility for diary entries could create conflict amongst family members as in some way they represented hierarchical relationships within the family system and the quality of the relationship with the patient.

An Emotional toll taken on participants when engaging with the diary: This sub-theme was generated through descriptions of how emotionally difficult it was to engage with the contents of the diary. Many studies reported that participants felt a continued emotional impact from the diaries several months after their ICU experience (Engstrom et al, 2009; Strandberg et al, 2017 & Neilsen et al, 2019).

Engstrom et al (2009) explored the patient's experience of the reading the diary at least 2 months post-ICU discharge, and found that the process to be an emotionally demanding experience. The emotions felt by the participants ranged from joy to sorrow, with participants describing a sense of fear when reading the diary for the first time. While many required regular breaks to deal with the emotional toll participants reported the process as beneficial.

“I cried and cried but it was very beneficial. It was good to see what had happened, but it was a hard to read how I had been, what they had done to me and who had been there...” (p.63).

Similarly, participants in Engstrom et al (2009) study felt diaries aided recovery and wellbeing.

“...I'd definitely recommend it [a diary] to anyone. I think it's, I'm not saying it's easy, I probably sat there sometimes sobbing my heart out but I think sometimes that's what you need to do” (p.5)

However, O' Gara and Pattison (2016) caution that diaries may actually prevent patients being unable to move on in their emotional recovery if diaries are used to continually revisit events. In a similar way Nielsen et al (2018) found that diaries may be too intense and overwhelming for patients to read. Conversely, Ewens et al (2013) found that although the participants felt that reading the diary was an emotional experience, it did not negatively impact them, instead it reinforced their experience, and helped them move on.

Theme Three: A Useful Communication Tool

Two sub-themes; A connection to loved ones; and clear and coherent described how dairies were being used to provide patients and relatives a means of communication within themselves as a family and themselves with healthcare staff.

A connection to loved ones.

The sub-theme; 'A connection to loved ones' was generated through findings which emphasised feelings of isolation and loneliness from within the ICU environment and how dairies provided a connection to the relative when they were unable to communicate with them in reality (Johansson et al, 2014 & Neilsen & Angel, 2016). Furthermore, Engstrom et al's (2009) findings showed how participants felt that the diary was a useful tool in opening up conversations about their time in ICU, and enabled them to revisit it with their loved ones. They felt that the diary functioned as a support immediately following their discharge and also for a considerable time after, many stating that they read the diary often.

"It gave me information about what had happened and that is essential to understand and work through the event" (P. 64)

Johansson et al (2014) highlighted that the dairies became a link between the patients and relatives that strengthened and deepened their bond. As the patients were unable to communicate for most of their stay in ICU due to varying levels of consciousness and lucidity, the diary was utilised by the participants as way of confirming and evidencing their experience and the dedication that they showed to their loved ones at the bedside.

Clear and coherent

This sub-theme examined how dairies were being utilised as a way for the relatives to gain a sense of coherence about their relative's, and their own, time in ICU, in addition to being able to understand complex information in a jargon-free and more accessible format. The dairies were also utilised by the relatives as a way to share information with one another (Johansson et al. 2014; Nielsen & Angel, 2016) or a means to 'catch-up' when they had been away from the ICU (Ewens et al. 2013).

Garrouste-Orgeas (2014) found that participants valued the information written in the dairies by the healthcare staff and felt that it was more reliable and powerful than

when they received verbal updates. The study also highlighted that the utilisation of the diaries to provide clear and coherent information meant that the relatives did not feel the need to ask further questions and to have the information repeated to them.

“There’s no need to ask staff members the same thing over and over again...we don’t ask about information in the diary, because it’s written down” (Pg. 3) By having this access to medical information through the diaries in a way that was easily accessible to them, participants felt that the information was easier to assimilate as they could re-read the entries as often as they needed to (Garrouste-Orgeas, 2014).

“Since it’s written down, we can read it as often as we want...” (Pg. 4). This finding was supported by Johansson et al (2014) in which participants noted that the nurses tended to repeat information that had been conveyed by the doctors in everyday language

“...instead of them asking all the time, well, what then, what then and what then, right?” (P. 4).

Although the patient was sedated, relatives also felt that the diary was a means of communication with them in which they could narrate about their everyday lives in the same they would in person (Johansson et al. 2014). They also found that the diary opened up discussions with the nursing staff and enabled a closer therapeutic relationship to be built, which in turn allowed for better communication between them.

Discussion

The findings of this review show patient diaries can have a negative and positive impact on both the patient and their relatives. Whilst studies have explored and examined how patient diaries can be an effective tool for filling in their memory gaps (Roulin, et al, 2007; Jones, 2009; Pattison et al, 2019), diaries also have potential to exacerbate post-ICU reactions rather than diminish the impact of their ICU admission (Aitken et al, 2013).

This review has illuminated the potential risk of diaries and the emotional toll this exerts on family members. Much thought should be given to the individual family

contexts and dynamics and if diaries may contribute to their distress or relieve it. Similarly, attention should be paid to the potential of diaries to cause distress to the patient and space should be created to support them to read and make sense of its content with input from a healthcare professional at follow-up appointments.

Despite the increasing use of patient diaries there is limited research on the impact of this intervention on the relatives themselves (Hale et al, 2010; Thomas & Bell, 2011). Research by McIlroy et al (2019) has shown that there is some evidence to suggest that patient diaries can reduce post-ICU trauma among relatives, and Garrouste-Orgeas et al, (2014) highlighted how the contributing to dairies can lessen feelings of helplessness. However, more studies are required to examine the impact on family members.

This review found that dairies are an important tool and co-authoring between family members and healthcare professionals enhance relationships and communication. However, clearer guidance as to content, language and literacy are required if the benefits of this communication tool are to be maximised.

As a result of the findings of this review a number of practice recommendations have been made (see Table 2)

- Healthcare professionals should consider the overall impact of implementing patient diaries on both the patient and the family.
- Consideration should be given to the suitability of the patient for receiving the diary and attention paid to family dynamics and unique family contexts.
- Guidance and support should be given to relatives about how to contribute to a diary that may be used to support the recovery of their family member.
- Positive and negative impacts from the diary should be clearly outlined to all parties.
- Practitioners should be responsive to situations where relatives feel the diary may cause additional psychological harm to themselves or others.
- Patient diaries should be included in post-discharge follow ups with patients to create a space in which patients can discuss their thoughts and feelings

regarding the diaries content and allow practitioners the opportunity to further support the patient if necessary.
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<u>Table 3: Practice recommendations</u>
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Limitations

Narrative reviews are often difficult to replicate and subject to bias (Grant & Booth, 2009). This review was limited by the restriction of publication date to the last 10 years, the reliance on the lead author to locate and appraise studies and the pragmatic decision to exclude grey literature. However, these limitations were mitigated by a comprehensive methodology and close supervision by the second author.

Conclusion

This review has explored the implications that patient diaries have on relationships, both between the main contributor and the recipient, and also between co-authors of the diary. However, it is not yet fully understood how diaries impact on these relationships. Therefore, further research is necessary to provide a more holistic approach to implementing diaries, and to ensure that by encouraging the use of patient diaries, healthcare professionals are not potentially causing additional harm.

Conflict of interest statement: The authors have no conflict of interest to declare

Ethical approval: No ethical review was required for this study because no human subjects were involved.

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Matrix of Evidence

	Author date country of origin	Questions Hypotheses Aim	Methodology	Data collection	Population & Sample	Analysis strategy	Key Findings (Results)	Limitations	Conclusions Implications for practice
1	Johansson et al (2014) Sweden	To explore a family members' experiences with keeping a diary during a sick relative's stay in the ICU.	Hermeneutic interview study	Audio taped interviews ranging from 35-70 minutes, conducted as a participative conversation between the interviewer	Inclusion;a blood relative or close friend/partner who had an ICU diary; being willing to share experiences ; 18+; have the ability to	The model of Geanellos (2005) was used to analyse the data. Several step process – reading and re-reading the	Diary was a form of connection between them and their loved one in a time when the usual methods of communication weren't possible.	Main concern for this paper is one of the authors is also a nurse and therefore as level of pre-understanding of the subject matter that may have	Involving family members may be therapeutic. A need for practice guidelines about how to best promote appropriate use of diaries. A useful source of information for both patient

				and the interviewee	<p>·</p> <p>speak Swedish.</p> <p>Exclusion;</p> <p>Family members with dementia; who are grieving; and those who the author had treated.</p> <p>Sample size:11</p>	<p>transcript;</p> <p>first level of interpretation – reduction; integrations; subthemes and themes; and meta-theme.</p>	<p>Highlights the need for guidance for professionals in the implementation of diaries on an individualised level.</p>	<p>influenced the interviews that were conducted by them.</p>	<p>and family member.</p> <p>Individualised approach is key.</p>
2	Engstrom, Grip & Hamren (2009)	Describe peoples' experience of a personal diary written	Qualitative	Qualitative audio recorded personal	9 people out of 22 who were formerly critically ill	Qualitative content analysis	Participants were 'deeply touched' when	Small number of participants	Diaries can be used as a tool to add coherence to ICU stay.

	Sweden	when they were critically ill and receiving care in an ICU.		narrative interviews	who were discharged at least 18 month previously; 18+. 4 men and 5 women responded.		reading it for the first time. Felt like they were reading about someone else and although it aroused strong feelings they felt it would serve as a support in the long-term.	Conducted in Swedish and then translated to English – possibility that the process could affect the findings.	Patients may benefit from being able to discuss and ask questions about what they read in their diary.
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3	Nielson et al (2018) Denmark	To explore patients' and relatives' perceptions and use of a diary written by relatives for the critically ill patient.	Hermeneutic - phenomenological	Dyadic interviews 3-6 months post discharge & 8-16 months post discharge	10 critically ill patients and 13 relatives. All 18+ and all patients had undergone mechanical ventilation.	Ricoeur's theory of interpretation; 3 step process – naïve reading; structural analysis; critical interpretation.	A strengthened relationship between patient and relative. Relatives need guidance on when to share the diary with the patient.	Doesn't explore the patients use of diary in early stages of recovery. Dyadic interviews- 1 person may dominate another.	The need for nurses to know when is appropriate to use the diary and for support for relatives on when to share the diary.
4	Nielsen & Angel (2016)	Exploring relatives interaction with other relatives when writing a diary	Phenomenological - Hermeneutic	Interviews	7 relatives who wrote in the diary of 6 patients who survived.	Ricoeur's theory of interpretation; 3 step process – naïve reading;	Writing in the diaries gave a sense of creating a shared story.	No input regarding patients perspective as to who should author their	Further research required into the impact on relationships including the

	Denmark	for the critically ill.				structural analysis; critical interpretation.	Authoring the diary could be both a powerful position in shaping the story and a burden.	diary. Majority female participants.	patients perspective.
5	Ewens et al (2013) Australia	To explore survivors and family members' perceptions and utilisation of diaries following discharge from hospital.	Qualitative	Qualitative descriptive study using surveys at 3,6 and 12 months post discharge.	32 participants were eligible – 18 took part. 7 completed all 3 surveys; 6 completed the first 2; 5 completed the first	Qualitative descriptive	Patients felt that they were a positive initiative in their recovery. Felt that the diary helped them make sense of their time	Small sample, low response rate and the use of a single site. No demographic data collected	Whilst participants read the diary they did not necessarily utilise the diary and continue to use it through their ongoing treatment.

					survey only. 18+ ventilated for at least 24 hours receiving on-going treatment, no new or pre-existing cognitive impairment; English speaking		and reinforced the human connection when they were immersed in a technological environment		
6	O' Gara & Pattison (2016) UK	Exploration of the impact of diaries on critical care patients around the UK in order to	Qualitative	Qualitative interviews using principles of grounded theory via	8 people in the UK who had previously had critical care diaries	Coding of the date was used in the first instance progressing to constant	Fil gaps for the patients memory. Patients needed support when first	Self selected participants who replied to adverts on CCU sites.	Guidance and support is needed for the patient before receiving the diary and as a follow up.

		describe the long term effects of patient diaries.		telephone and email.	in the past 1-3 years.	comparative technique as outlined by grounded theory.	receiving the diary to understand the events that took place.	Small number of participants.	Guidance on when to use the diary and who for.
7	Garrouste-Orgeas et al (2014) UK	To investigate the families' experience with reading and writing in patient diaries kept by both family and staff	Qualitative	32 semi-structured interviews	32 interviews of relatives of 26 patients (34% of all family members who visited patients) Patients ventilated for more than 48hours.	Grounded theory using a 3 step coding process	Diaries served as a powerful tool to deliver holistic patient care. Diaries made family members aware of their valuable role	Educational level of the sample may limit the general applicability of results. Family dynamics were not considered.	Diary can play an important role in improving the wellbeing of ICU patient families.

8	Egerod & Bagger (2010) Denmark	Explore patients' experience and perceptions of receiving intensive care diaries.	Qualitative	Focus groups	4 participants, 3 male and 1 female representing the intervention and control group in a previous study.	Thematic analysis	Patients felt that the diary alone provided incomplete information. Reading the diary did not necessarily bring back memories but helped complete their story.	Small sample. Focus groups normally 6-8 participants. Findings not immediately transferable but provide more understanding.	Diaries need to be used in conjunction with other information such as hospital charts, relative accounts etc.

9	Strandberg, Vesterlund & Engstrom (2017) Sweden	Describe the contents of a patients diary and its significance for persons cared for in an ICU.	Qualitative	8 telephone interviews and 1 face-to-face interview.	18+; been treated in ICU for at least 72 hours; had read their diaries.	Qualitative content analysis.	Patients felt confirmed and valued as a person. Guidelines need to be developed to encourage relatives and nurses to write in the diary.	Most interviews carried out over the phone. Some people actively choose to not remember certain aspects of their ICU stay.	Nurses allocating time to write in the diary will reduce gaps and prevent patients having missing elements.
10	Nielsen, Egerod & Angel (2019)	To explore patients perceptions of an ICU diary	Hermeneutic – phenomenological	Interviews that took place in the	10 participants from 2 regional	Ricoeur's theory of interpretation; 3 step	Patients found that the diaries helped them	All diaries written by female relatives.	A dairy can help patients piece together a story and fragmented

Denmark	written by relatives including pictures by staff		participants home	ICU in Denmark. Mechanically ventilated patients during their stay. To include a variation of gender, age and relationship with the relatives.	process – naïve reading; structural analysis; critical interpretation.	to understand their time in the ICU. Felt ‘touched and loved by the care conveyed in the diary’ There was a risk of overwhelming the patients when confronted by the grief/agony that their	The different styles of diaries may pose a limitation and dyadic interviewing may limit or oppress participants expressing their views in fear of offending their relatives.	memories. The diaries authored by relatives evolved from a nursing intervention and facilitates patients understanding of relatives feelings, distress and love for them.
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