

ICU diaries may aid survivors in recovery after discharge

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Photo: U.S. National Institutes of Health

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(HealthDay)—Patient diaries kept during a hospital stay in the intensive care unit (ICU) for a critical illness may be used as a therapeutic tool to assist survivors in recovery after discharge, according to research published online Dec. 8 in the *Journal of Clinical Nursing*.

Beverley A. Ewens, R.N., of Edith Cowan University in Joondalup, Australia, and colleagues reviewed the literature on the use, prevalence, purpose, and potential therapeutic effects of ICU diaries.

The researchers found that ICU diaries are not commonly used except in Scandinavia and some other parts of Europe. The implementation and ongoing use of ICU diaries is inconsistent, and some propose the development of international guidelines. Recent evidence suggests that the use of ICU diaries may decrease psychological complications after discharge.

"Further investigation is warranted to explore the potential benefits of diaries for survivors and improve the evidence base which is currently insufficient to inform practice," the authors write.

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