Nurses’ Knowledge Regarding Delirium in Hospitalized Older Adults

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Introduction

• Delirium affects over 2 million patients 65 years and older each year in the United States (Fong, et. al, 2009).

• Patients experiencing delirium have an increased length of stay, higher hospital costs, and increased nursing hours per day as compared to patients not experiencing delirium (Fong, et. al, 2009).

• Patients experiencing delirium have clinical signs of decline and functional abilities (Fong, et. al. 2009).
Literature Review

• Researchers have confirmed a lack of knowledge about delirium, including recognition, identifying risk factors, and management (Hare, et. al, 2008, Hamdan-Mansour, et.al, 2010).

• Researchers identified inadequate nursing knowledge, assessment and documentation as well as issue related to frustration when communication with physicians regarding delirium (Steis and Fick, 2008).

• Researchers confirmed that an educational intervention was effective based on nationally recommended standards and that it did improve the nurse’s knowledge and it would be highly beneficial to provide continuing education (Meako, Thompson, & Cochran, 2011).
Research Purpose and Objective

Purpose:
• The purpose of this study is to assess knowledge of nurses working in WellStar Hospitals pertaining to delirium in hospitalized older adults.

Objectives:
• To determine if there is a need for additional education regarding delirium among the nurses
• To improve the safety, care and outcomes of hospitalized older adults
Research Questions

1. What is the nurses’ knowledge regarding identification of delirium risk factors in hospitalized older adults?

2. What is the nurses’ knowledge regarding preventative interventions that decrease the incidence of delirious episodes in patients identified at risk?

3. What is the nurses’ knowledge related to assessing and recognizing signs of delirium in the hospitalized older adults?
Method and Design

• Convenience sample from a population of 1039 working nurses working in acute care facilities
• Computer-based survey
• All levels of nurses working at five area hospitals
• Approved by Institutional Review Board, University of West Georgia
• Informed consent obtained from participants
• Participation was voluntary
WellStar Health System Overview

- Not-for profit
- Service Area: 5 counties in Northwest Georgia
- 5 Hospitals
- 5 Urgent Care Centers
- 5 Imaging Centers
- 1,200 affiliated physicians
  - WMG 470 Physicians and Advanced Practitioners
- 86 Office locations
- 12,000+ employees/3,221 nurses
- 1321 licensed inpatient beds
- 64,667 discharges
- 10,017 deliveries
- 318,176 ED visits
- 1,105,302 physician group visits
Instrument

- Survey questionnaire
- Cognition-Delirium Survey is used to determine if basic knowledge has been obtained
- NICHE ~ Geriatric Resource Nurse
- Content validity established
- 12 multiple choice questions

Sample Question:
Delirium is characterized by:
  a. Disturbed thinking, perceptual disturbances, distracted from task
  b. Impaired judgment, conceals deficits, failings noticed by family
  c. Hopelessness, somatic complaints, failings noticed by individual
  d. Self-deprecation, perceptual disturbances absent, neglect of self
Results

• $n = 350$ participants
• 60% have not attended an in-service or educational offering
• Years of experience
  – 29.4% with 6-15 years of experience
  – 29.7% have 16 or more years of experience
• Highest RN degree
  – 61.7% Baccalaureate Degree in nursing
  – 26% Associate Degree in nursing
• Work environment
  – 67% Acute Care/Medical-Surgical-Telemetry
  – 29% Critical Care
• Shift primarily worked
  – 32.3% work day shift (7a-7p or 7a-3p)
  – 55.1% work night shift (7p-7a or 11p-7a)
• 12 Delirium Questions
  – 5 Answered correctly greater than 70%
  – 7 Answered below 70%
Correctly Answered Questions

1. The incidence of delirium in hospitalized hip fracture patients is approximately 50%.

3. Which environmental intervention may help to reduce factors that may exacerbate delirium:

6. Precipitating factors for delirium include:

11. A class of medications known to precipitate delirium include:

12. A approach that addresses identified risk factors is an effective method for the prevention and management of delirium.
Questions Not Answered Correctly

2. Delirium is characterized by:
4. Delirium is easily prevented and diagnosed.
5. An appropriate assessment parameter for delirium includes:
7. The hallmark of delirium is an abnormal mental status examination.
8. The MMSE appears to be less influenced by a patient’s educational level than the Mini-Cog.
9. The CAM is a standardized tool to assess for delirium that addresses:
10. A consequence of delirium may include:
Conclusions

Survey participants revealed a knowledge deficit regarding delirium, risk factors, preventative interventions, and the care of hospitalized older adults experiencing episodes of delirium.

Survey participants’ basic knowledge of delirium did not differ in terms of formal education, years of experience or work environment.
Study Limitations

• Sample limited to one hospital system
• Sample size evaluated one third of the systems licensed bedside nurses
• 12 survey questions used to assess nurses knowledge
• First study completed at the system level assessing nurses knowledge of delirium in hospitalized older adults
Implications for Practice

- Provide ongoing educational training focused on the prevention and treatment of hospitalized older adults regarding delirium
- Consideration should be given to how delirium competencies are being assessed
- The impact of nurses lack of knowledge results in negative patient outcomes and extended lengths of stay
- It is imperative that nurses
  - Recognize risk factors
  - Implement preventive measures
  - have the knowledge to deliver safe, appropriate care to patients experiencing delirium
Discussion

Questions

Answers

Suggestions

Thank you
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