ALCOHOLIC LIVER DISEASE: Treatment for Alcohol Withdrawal & Management

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PROJECT METHODOLOGY

A need for education related to the treatment of patients experiencing alcohol withdrawal was identified after witnessing multiple newly hired nurses in a regional area fail to recognize CIWA protocol and fail to follow CIWA management guidelines. Initial evidence exploration was focused on patients experiencing alcohol withdrawal and associated liver function tests.

A thorough review of literature yielded sufficient evidence to support the recommendation to implement the chronic care model to improve patient care, impact clinical outcomes positively, reduce the resources used in a clinical setting, and decrease costs associated with treating chronic conditions such as alcoholism. The literature review also revealed that high levels of the liver enzymes, such as ALT, AST, and GGT, are associated with long-term alcohol consumption, which leads to alcoholic hepatitis and alcoholic liver disease. Therefore, the higher the level of ALT, AST, and GGT, then the greater risk of developing alcoholic liver disease resulting from untreated alcohol-related conditions.

Plan and Development

Deliverable products were developed and recommended and included the following:

- Pre-Assessment Survey, which included case studies.
- PowerPoint presentation highlighting the treatment for alcohol withdrawal.
- Post-Assessment Survey, which included case studies.
- Collaboration with IMC Educator and Management Team to achieve endorsement.

Evaluation

Development of pre- and post-assessment survey to be administered to new hire nurses on IMC to provide information about the following:

- Treatment of patients experiencing alcohol withdrawal.
- CIWA protocol for the patient experiencing alcohol withdrawal.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of provided medical management education.
- Alter alcohol withdrawal education to promote effectiveness as needed (post-survey results).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research revealed that no consistent or standard model of care for patients experiencing alcohol withdrawal is being utilized. In addition, the following laboratory tests have been proven indicators of alcoholic liver disease and are associated with long-term use of alcohol consumption:

- Alanine transaminase (ALT)
- Gamma-glutamyl transferase (GGT)
- Platelet count
- Bilirubin

CONCLUSIONS

Treating patients who have been diagnosed with alcoholic hepatitis or alcoholic liver disease remains complex for the healthcare team. Training new nurses how to safely manage and treat a patient with alcohol withdrawal syndrome using the CIWA protocol is the first step in developing a standardized model of evidence-based care to improve patient outcomes and decrease complications. Testing of liver function for patients admitted for alcohol withdrawal should be added to the protocol and should include a thorough workup of the patients, such as the following:

- Physical assessment and health history
- Assessing biomarkers M30 and M65
- Liver enzymes, including ALT, AST, and GGT

REFERENCES

11. Clinical information technology
12. Systematic decision making and support
13. Self-management & support