Improved Pain Management in the Acute Care Setting Through Education for Nurses

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PROJECT METHODOLOGY

In the acute care setting, pain management remains a difficult issue. Deficient pain education and pain management skills were identified as a topic for an improvement project following discussions with patients and nurses. The aim of this project is to improve pain education, intervention strategies, and management approaches by nursing staff. Improvement in these areas will engage the patient as part of the healthcare team, address patient safety, and strengthen the relationship between nurse and patient.

Project Development and Implementation

The implementation of the improvement project is being piloted at a local acute care facility on the medical and surgical care floors. Approval was gained through the Nursing Advisory Committee and Nursing Leadership Committee.

Project preparation included development of a lesson plan, multisensory didactic instruction that incorporates media, and clinical simulation studies. The following teaching tools were created.

- Lesson Plan
- PowerPoint presentation
- Pain case studies
- Pain Scale Education Tool
- Nursing Evaluation Tool

Project Evaluation

The improvement project is currently active on the medical and surgical care units. Preliminary feedback by nursing staff, quality improvement, and unit directors is positive. A copy of the Pain Scale Education Tool is being used in patient admission packets for patients on the medical and surgical floors. Current barriers to effective use are:

- No patient education on pain scale education tool.
- Clinical staff not using the pain scale education tool.
- Resistance to change.

Education is being reinforced, and nursing super users have been identified as implementers and promoters of the pain scale evaluation tool. Ongoing evaluation is occurring.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Acute Pain Management theory and Cognitive-Field Theories guided the development of this project. These two theories provide a framework describing how patients relate to pain, pain control, and nursing involvement.

- Acute pain management theory (*) describes the relationship between nurses and patients and how these relate to pain in the acute care setting.
- Cognitive-field (*) theories describe how the person is made up of different parts that equal a whole, the whole can be affected by the many parts that make up the whole. Perception of the parts or the whole that make up a person, can affect the way a person relates to the physical and psychological world.

CONCLUSIONS

Pain management in relation to nursing continues to be a complex concept. Ongoing focus and education about patient centered pain control for the nursing workforce can be described as a continuous cycle. The continuous cycle includes education, involvement of patient and nursing, current research, evaluation, and recommended practices.

REFERENCES