Medication Challenges Among Homecare Nurses

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**Purpose:**

Drug therapy is very important for the health care of the elderly persons. The homecare nurses are the first-line medical staff to care for the elderly persons at home. They should strengthen the inquiry and understand the medication status of the elderly persons, and clarify the indications and treatment goals of current prescriptions, and serve as bridges of communication between our elderly persons and the medical team members. However, little is known about the challenges of homecare nurses in the face of medication for the elderly persons at home. Therefore, we would explore homecare nurses face the challenges of medication for the elderly persons at home.

**Methods:**

Qualitative research was designed for this study. Focus group interviews with homecare nurses were conducted among 23 homecare agencies in northern Taiwan. The number of homecare nurses in each focus group is 2-9. The results obtained were analyzed by content analysis.

**Results:**

Eight themes were derived as the common medication problems in the elderly persons and challenges confronted by the homecare nurses. 1. Self-prescribing by the elderly persons/family members. 2. Multiple and duplicate medications by multiple prescription institutions/physicians. 3. Medicine taking problems. 4. Elderly persons/family members dare not to discuss medication problems with physicians. 5. Communication with family caregivers. 6. Communication with medical team members. 7. Insufficient competence of medication for the elderly. 8. Lack of interdisciplinary knowledge and cooperation.

**Conclusion:**

This study found similar results to the common medication problems in the elderly persons and the challenges confronted by homecare nurses. The most common challenges for homecare nurses are self-prescribing as the elderly persons/family members often considered themselves to be physicians, multiple medications/duplicate medications, lack of communication with medical team members, and insufficient competence of medication for the elderly persons. The findings of this study help medical personnel to understand the challenges of homecare nurses facing the medication of the elderly persons, and as a reference for designing future interventions.
Abstract Summary:
The findings of this study help medical personnel to understand the challenges of homecare nurses facing the medication of the elderly, and as a reference for designing future interventions.

Content Outline:
Backgrounds: Drug therapy is very important for the health care of the elderly persons. The homecare nurses are the first-line medical staff to care for the elderly persons at home. They should strengthen the inquiry and understand the medication status of the elderly persons, and clarify the indications and treatment goals of current prescriptions, and serve as bridges of communication between our elderly persons and the medical team members. However, little is known about the challenges of homecare nurses in the face of medication for the elderly persons at home.

Aim: Exploring homecare nurses face the challenges of medication for the elderly persons at home.

Methods: Qualitative research was designed for this study. Focus group interviews with homecare nurses were conducted among 23 homecare agencies in northern Taiwan. The number of homecare nurses in each focus group is 2-9. The results obtained were analyzed by content analysis.

Results: Eight themes were derived as the common medication problems in the elderly persons and challenges confronted by the homecare nurses. 1. Self-prescribing by the elderly persons/family members. 2. Multiple and duplicate medications by multiple prescription institutions/physicians. 3. Medicine taking problems. 4. Elderly persons/family members dare not to discuss medication problems with physicians. 5. Communication with family caregivers. 6. Communication with medical team members. 7. Insufficient competence of medication for the elderly persons. 8. Lack of interdisciplinary knowledge and cooperation.

Conclusions: This study found similar results to the common medication problems in the elderly persons and the challenges confronted by homecare nurses. The most common challenges for homecare nurses are self-prescribing as the elderly persons/family members often considered themselves to be physicians, multiple medications/duplicate medications, lack of communication with medical team members, and insufficient competence of medication for the elderly persons.

Implication for practice: The findings of this study help medical personnel to understand the challenges of homecare nurses facing the medication of the elderly persons, and as a reference for designing future interventions.

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