A Collaborative Evidence-based Project to Improve Healthcare for the Elderly in Long-term Care

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Purpose

The purpose of this collaborative project between long-term care (LTC) staff and nursing faculty is to increase the knowledge of and implementation off Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) in the LTC setting to improve the quality of care and outcomes.

Background/Significance

There are several reasons why this project is significant. Healthcare providers have been challenged to improve patient outcomes by providing care based upon the best available evidence. The implementation of EBP into healthcare is not an easy challenge to meet. This process requires the practitioner to have knowledge regarding EBP and can be very time consuming. Research has found that awareness and use of research evidence in practice remains low. As a result of this gap, there have been local, national, and international initiatives to increase EBP in healthcare. This lack of knowledge and implementation of EBP is especially prevalent in ECFs where many nurses are not educated in EBP. Long-term care facilities have a low percentage of Registered Nurses (RNs), let alone nurses with baccalaureate degrees where EBP is introduced and emphasized. This, coupled with the need for EBP to promote positive outcomes related to things such as falls, infection, pressure ulcers, and dementia care make the ECF a setting where EBP is especially needed.

Overview of Project

The faculty member has enacted the EBP mentor role to facilitate the integration of evidence into policy/procedures and at bedside in three long-term care facilities (one each in Saginaw, Bay, and Midland counties). In this role, the faculty member has helped staff at the agencies answer clinical questions using evidence, assisted in making changes in practice, provided educational opportunities for healthcare providers in the long-term care facilities regarding EBP, and mentored undergraduate nursing students as EBP facilitators.

Examples of Completed Evidence-based Reviews

- For adults in LTC facilities, what are the best criteria to use in the decision to do *Clostridium difficile* screening?
- For care providers in LTC facilities, what strategies are most effective to facilitate communication with family members?
- For residents of LTC facilities with dementia, what are the best strategies of communication?
- For care providers in LTC facilities, what strategies are most effective to facilitate proper prioritization of nursing care?
- For LTC facilities, what is the relationship between RN staffing and resident outcomes?
- For LTC facilities, what are the best strategies for recruitment and retention of Registered Nurses?
- For elderly residents in LTC without urinary catheters, what is the best way to prevent urinary tract infections?
- For residents of LTC facilities what is the best practice related to alarm reduction with an outcome of patient safety?
- For residents of LTC facilities, what is the best practice to promote adequate sleep?
- For assisted living (AL) facilities, what type of staffing (type and level) is most
- For residents of LTC facilities (with an emphasis on AL), what is the best practice to prevent flu transmission?
- For residents of long-term care facilities (with an emphasis on AL), what is the best practice for fall prevention?
- For elderly residents in AL facilities, what is the best way to prevent urinary tract infections?
- For residents in LTC facilities what is best practice for diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of the transmission of scabies?
- For LTC facilities, what are the best strategies to increase retention of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)?
- For residents of LTC facilities with dementia, what are the best activities to improve cognition and decrease anxiety and agitation?

Other Activities

- Educational offerings for staff on family communication and prioritization
- Posters on communication with dementia residents
- Dementia care mapping
- Infection control team
- Grant for exercise equipment
- Exercise intervention using nursing students
- Attitudes of nursing students toward the elderly research

Next Steps

- Continue with EBP reviews
- Education on EBP and other topics
- Presentations and publications
- Mentoring students