The Effect of a Nurse-centered Foot Care Protocol  
On Nurse Competency and Confidence

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Introduction

Objective: to determine whether nurse training in foot assessment and foot care increases nurse confidence and competence in foot care.

Background: While working in a rural inpatient healthcare facility where there is a high incidence of lower extremity complications it was noted that many nursing staff do not follow a centralized foot care protocol. Although there are policies in place to guide staff on foot care, the working reality is that feet are neglected and nurse confidence is poor pertaining to the care of feet.

Method

Nurses from an acute care mental health facility were recruited to take part in a 30-minute workshop on foot assessment and proper nail trimming. Thirty-one nurses agreed to participate. They were given a pre-knowledge survey, the educational material, including Inlow’s foot assessment tool, and then a post-education survey. Sixty days’ post-workshop, the nurses were again surveyed to determine if the knowledge gained was used, ongoing, and relevant.

Results

Levels of mastery were achieved with 20 to 22 correct answers (48%); 41.9% received 23 and 24/25 correct answers. With the alpha level set at p ≤ .05, the increase in test scores was statistically significant at p < .001. Pretest survey of foot care knowledge revealed the expected result that nurses had some knowledge of foot care. Mastery of the content implies that nurses have adequate knowledge to carry out a foot-care exam and are confident in their performance. As expected, varying levels of knowledge and confidence in performing the exam and foot care were found. Outliers were scores as low as 9 to a high score of 24 out of 25. The pretest revealed 61% of the sample did not have a mastery knowledge of foot assessment (M = 16.84, S = 4.148). After the educational workshop, post-test results revealed 6.4% participants did not achieve a mastery of knowledge in foot care.

Relevant Findings

Largest age group 41-59 58%
Highest degree masters educated
10 out of 31 participants completed 60 day post-test
38% stated never performs foot care despite facility policy

Post-Test Survey

Score of mastery by 60% of respondents
Paired t-test analysis of pre and 60 day post mean scores were statistically significant (p < .16), although not generalizable due to small sample size
Points toward education possibly making a change in nurse knowledge

References