

# Caring for the Adult with Intellectual Disability in the Acute Care Setting

A Nurse Education Program

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# Disclosure

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- Donna Harmon DNP, RN, ACNP BC, CNE
- I have no relevant financial relationships with commercial interests to disclose.
- I have no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this program/presentation.
- No sponsorship or commercial support was given to the author.

# Learning Objectives

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- Discuss the gap in the educational preparation of nurses in caring for this population
- Discuss the impact the gap has on the care of this population
- Articulate best practices when caring for this population in the acute care setting

# Overview

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- Gap in the educational preparation of healthcare providers in the care of people with intellectually disabilities.
- People with intellectual disabilities have a substandard quality of health care, and increased rates of morbidity and mortality.
- Best practices for this population include education of the healthcare provider.

# Background

- PWID have increased health care needs, poorer quality of care, and increased morbidity and mortality
- Contributing factors
  - provider lack of understanding or knowledge in the care of people with disabilities
  - delay in diagnosis
  - diagnostic overshadowing
- Negative attitudes about providing care to PWID has been linked to minimal education and experience with this population

Bultas, 2012; Lewis & Stenfert-Kroese, 2010; Vander Ploeg Booth, 2011

# The Gap

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1. The lack of knowledge
2. The lack of training
3. Nurses perceived low level of confidence in providing care of PWID.

# The Gap

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- Nursing Curricula
  - Less than 50% included educational courses in the care of the intellectually disabled
  - 60% of nurses in one study had no education during their formal education or since licensure in the care of PWID

Gardner, 2012, Temple & Mordoch, 2012; Trollor, 2016; Walsh, Hammerman, Josephson, & Krupka, 2000

# Closing the Gap: Methods

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- Quality improvement project
- Interprofessional Educational Seminar
- Objectives
  - Identify 2 signs and symptoms of common medical complications associated with this population
  - Discuss the unique needs of the patient and family during the hospitalization
  - Explain the nursing challenges of caring for adults with intellectual disabilities in the acute care setting
  - List 3 strategies to care for the adult with intellectual disabilities in the acute care setting.



# Methods Used

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- Two Hour Educational Program
  - Speakers : Nurses, Neurodevelopmental Physician, Parent, Nurse Practitioner
  - Video – Why are we here? A families experience
  - Lecture - Medical Issues for people with intellectual disability – Neurodevelopmental physician
  - Discussion - Nursing Care Challenges
  - Discussion - Parents Perspective
  - Lecture - Care Planning for the patient with Intellectual Disability
  - Discussion/Q&A

# Common Medical Issues

- Obesity
- Mental Health issues
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Infections- urinary, skin, GI
- Bowel obstruction complications
- Seizures
- Reflux and Aspiration pneumonia
- Dental infections
- Osteoporosis

# Key Questions for Assessment

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- What is the best way to communicate with the pt?
- What do we know about the patients hearing?
- What do we know about the patients vision?
- How do you know when something is bothering or hurting the patient?
- What seems different about the patient now compared to when they are well?
- Do you know their usual heart rate, blood pressure, temperature or respiratory rate?

# Care Planning



# Care Planning



## **BMC Nurse Practitioner Develops Activity Cart**

As part of her doctorate of nursing practice education, Nurse Practitioner Donna Harmon (center in photo), developed an activity cart for patients with intellectual disabilities

# Demographic Results

	Frequency	Percent
Age		
33-52	10	71.4%
55-62	3	21.4%
63-71	1	7.1%

Not included here is 1 student, 1EMT  
and 1 personal care attendant

# Results

	Frequency	Percent
Education Level		
Diploma	1	7.1%
Associate	4	28.6%
Bachelor	4	28.6%
Masters	5	35.7%

# Results Discussion

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- Intellectual disability - significant limitation in intellectual function and adaptive behaviors, onset before the age of 18
  
- Significant difference in:
  - Feeling confident in ability to co-ordinate care with an interprofessional team ( $p=.002$ )
  - Level of comfort in providing resources to caregivers experiencing caregiver role strain ( $p = .011$ )
  - Self- confidence in understanding the patient needs
  - Confidence in the ability to communicate effectively( $p=.002$ )

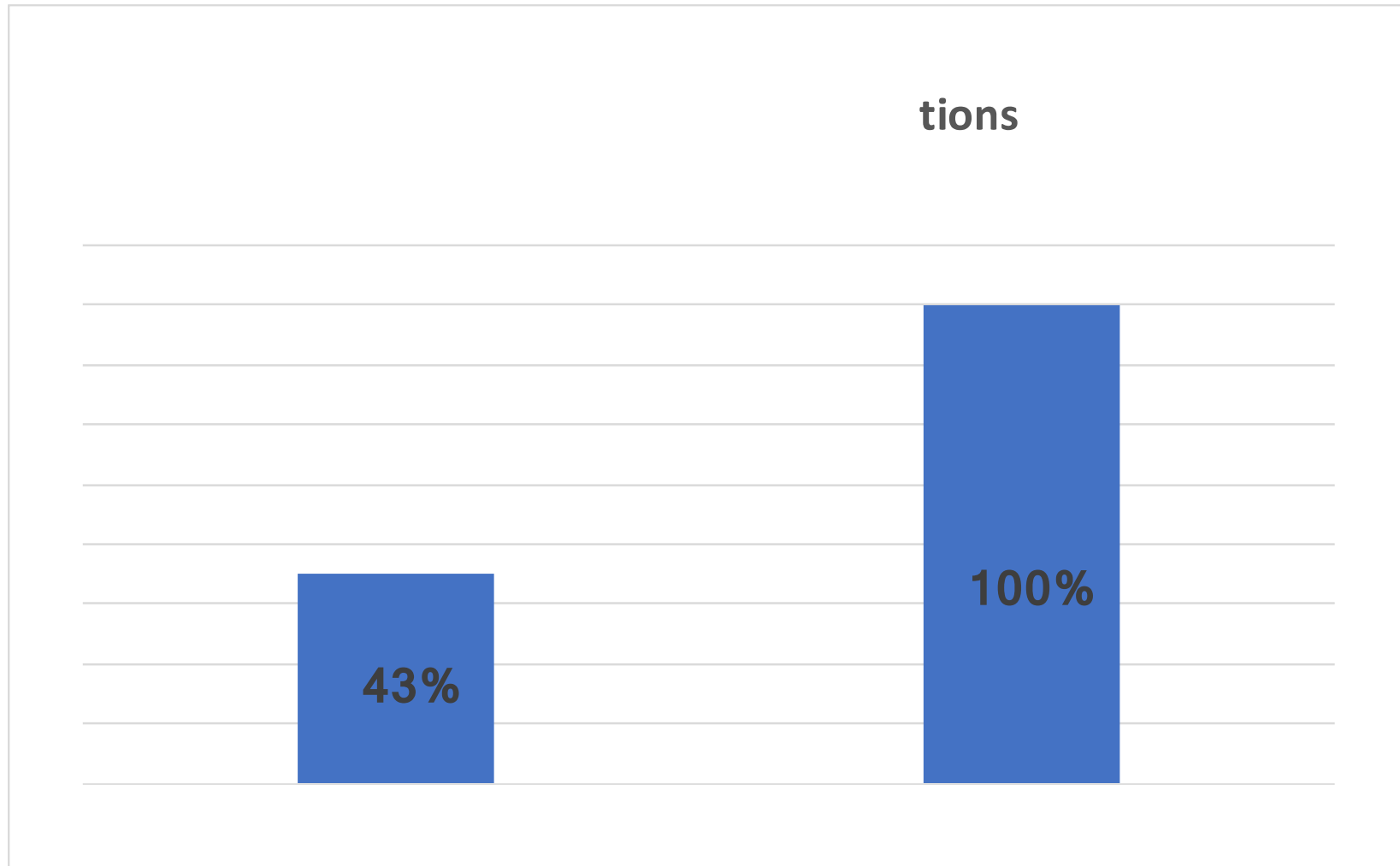


# Discussion

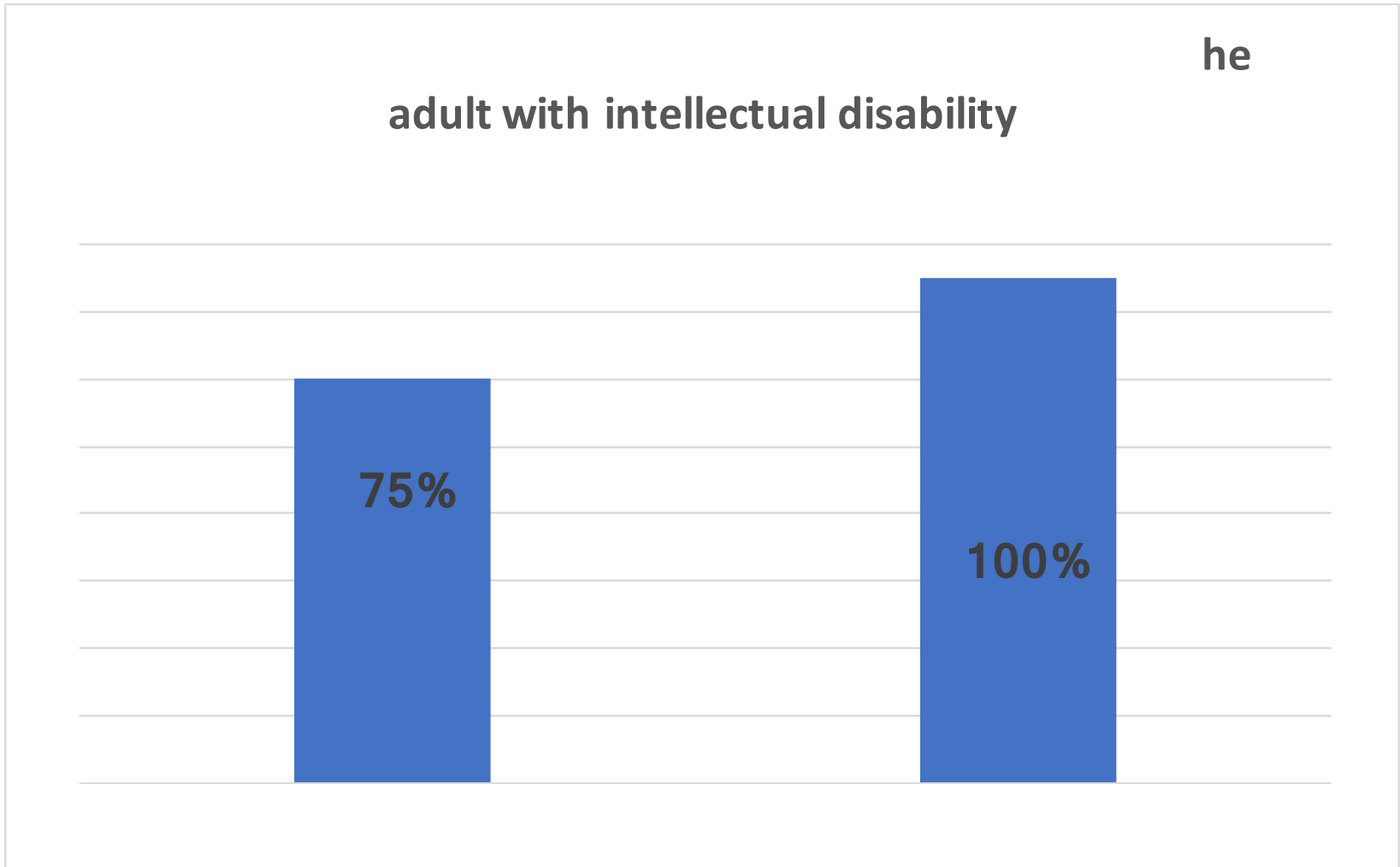
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- Significant difference in:
  - Ability to identify symptoms of common medical complications in this population ( $p=.003$ )
  - Understanding of nursing challenges ( $p=0.046$ )
  - The ability to list three nursing strategies in caring for this population ( $p=.002$ )

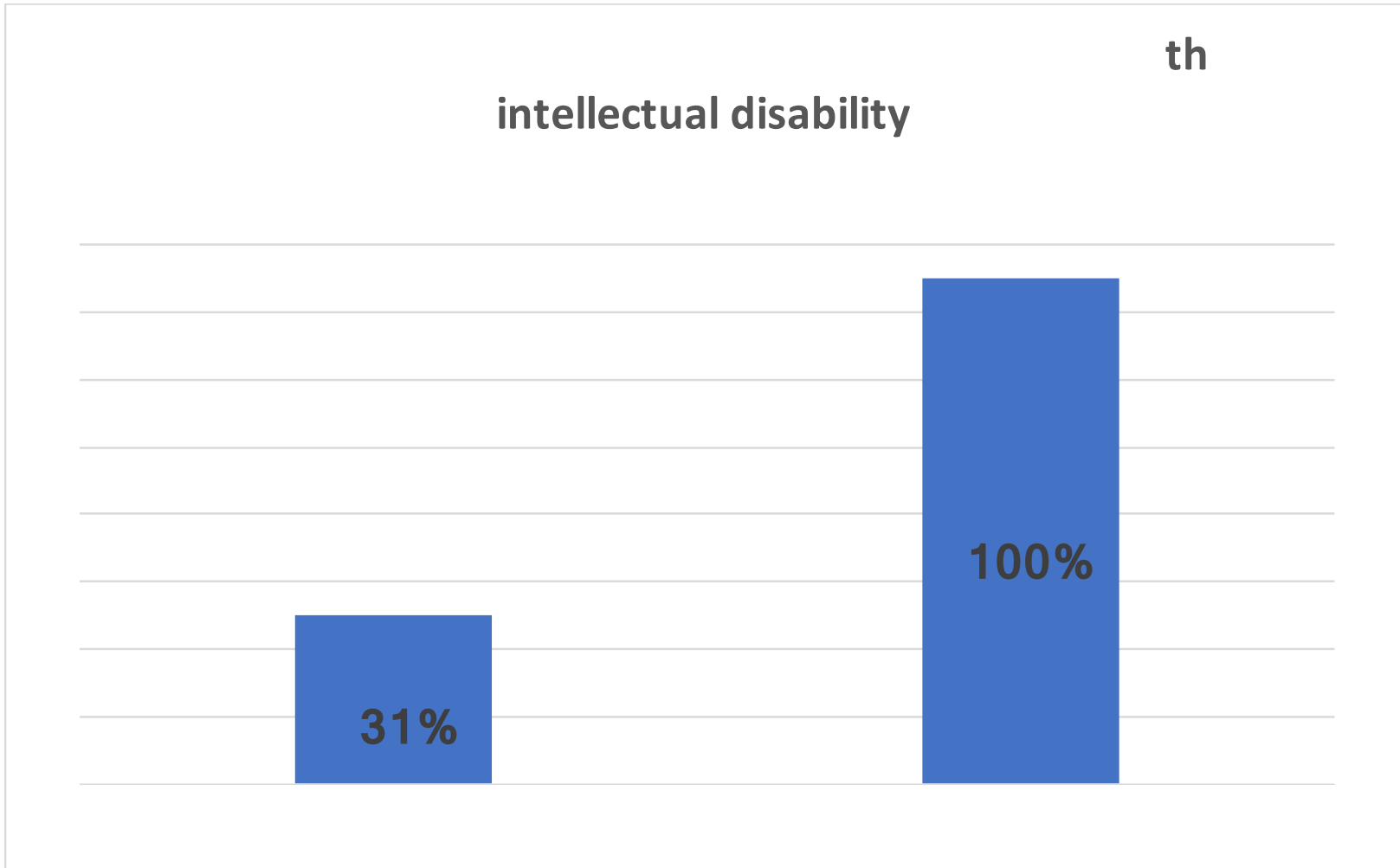
# Results Discussion



# Results Discussion



# Results Discussion



# Conclusion

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Results of this program demonstrate when given education nurses perceive themselves to be

- Confident in coordinated and interprofessional team
- Comfortable in providing resources to caregivers experiencing caregiver role strain
- Understand the patient needs
- Confident in their ability to communicate effectively

# Conclusion

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## Results of this program support

- Inclusion of courses in nursing programs about caring for the intellectually disabled person
- Continuing education to ensuring practicing nurses have the competencies to care for this population

# Conclusion

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## Limitations

- Sample Size
- All participants from same organization

# References

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