Factors Associated With Geriatric Care Competencies for RNs in Acute Care Setting

Wen Li Chang, BSN, RN
Department of Nursing, College of Medicine, National Cheng Kung University., Tainan City, Taiwan
Ying Ju Chang, PhD, RN
Department of Nursing, Institute of Allied Health Sciences, College of Medicine, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan, Tainan, Taiwan
Fang-Wen Hu, PhD, BS, RN
Department of Nursing, National Cheng Kung University Hospital, Tainan, Taiwan

Purpose: The health problems of hospitalized elderly patients are complicated. In order to meet the special care needs of hospitalized elderly patients, comprehensive assessment and integration across interdisciplinary team should be taken to provide an individualized care plan. Nurses, as the core members of the geriatric interdisciplinary team, must have good geriatric care competencies so as to provide appropriate aged care services. However, to date, there was no related certification about geriatric care competencies and rarely investigate the competencies of nurses in hospital. Thus, the aim of the present study is to explore the geriatric care competencies of nurses in hospital and identify the factors associated with geriatric care competencies.

Design: A descriptive correlational study was adopted in this study.

Methods: Nurses who look after patients aged 65 years and older at a medical center in southern Taiwan were enrolled in the study. The demographics variables, working condition, geriatric care educational condition, geriatric care knowledge scale, attitude toward geriatric care scale and self-reported geriatric care competency scale were determined through the structured questionnaires. In addition, comprehensive geriatric assessment is used to confirm the health problems among hospitalized elderly patients. By comparing with problem lists, we determine the competencies of geriatric problem assessment in nurses and which represents the objective geriatric care competencies.

Results: A total of 170 nurses were included in the study with the mean age of 27.6 years old. Of which 73 (42.9%) nurses worked at medical wards, and 48 (28.2%) of them worked at surgical wards, and the others worked at integrated wards or geriatric ward. As to the clinical experience, less than 5 years of clinical experience was the majority (74.4%), and 5 to 10 years was the second (11.3%). The average score for geriatric care knowledge was 86.08 ±4.44, while the attitude test came back 62.44±5.28. The score of self-reported geriatric care competency was 67.74±8.84. However, in objective geriatric care competencies, only 30 (17.6%) nurses can assess the healthy problem correctly. The univariate analysis showed comfort of working environment, satisfaction of working environment, importance of working, preference of working and family support and received geriatric care continuous education were significantly associated with self-reported geriatric care competency. However, the Linear regression analysis showed only received geriatric care continuous education was significantly associated with higher self-reported geriatric care competencies. On the other hand, from the objective view of geriatric care competencies, nurses who were younger and worked in internal unit had better performances, whereas it did not showed statistical significance in logistical regression analysis.

Conclusion: To our knowledge, we are the first study to determine objective and subjective geriatric care competencies for nurses in the acute care setting. The study showed that nurses who scores high in the subjective tests included the geriatric care knowledge, attitude and geriatric care competencies tended to correspond with a low score in objective measures, only 17.6 percent of test takers could accurately identify the needs of their patients. The evidence shows that there is a huge gap between subjective perception of geriatric care competencies and the ability of geriatric care competencies in reality objectively. In addition, nurses have accepted geriatric care continuous education bring them high confidence in geriatric care does not translate to a sizable improvement in objective measures. This study
urges our nursing education scholars to reconsider the structure and objective of elderly care training courses because how to shorten the gap between academic and practice will be a key point which is to improve nurses’ geriatric care competences.

Title:
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Keywords:
Competence, Geriatric care and Nurse

References:


Abstract Summary:
we are the first study to determine objective and subjective geriatric care competencies for nurses in the acute care setting, and this study urges our nursing education scholars to reconsider the structure and objective of elderly care training courses.

Content Outline:
I. Introduction
A. The health problems of hospitalized elderly patients are complicated. In order to meet the special care needs of hospitalized elderly patients, comprehensive assessment and integration across interdisciplinary team should be taken to provide an individualized care plan.

B. Nurses, as the core members of the geriatric interdisciplinary team, must have good geriatric care competencies so as to provide appropriate aged care services. However, to date, there was no related certification about geriatric care competencies and rarely investigate the competencies of nurses in hospital.

C. The aim of the present study is to explore the geriatric care competencies of nurses in hospital and identify the factors associated with geriatric care competencies.

II. Body
A. Main Point #1: The structured questionnaires which is included demographics variables, working condition, geriatric care educational condition, geriatric care knowledge scale, attitude toward geriatric care scale and self-reported geriatric care competency scale is be used to realize nurses’ subjectively geriatric care competencies.

1. Supporting point #1 : Nurses's age, education, marital status and relationship with care takers in the family.

a) Nurses' mean age of 27.6 years old in the study.

b) The univariate analysis showed family support were significantly associated with self-reported geriatric care competency.

2. Supporting point #2 : The study gathered data on number of years worked, level of nursing training, salary, and several job satisfaction indicators, which are belong to Working condition.

a) 73 (42.9%) nurses worked at medical wards, and 48 (28.2%) of them worked at surgical wards, and the others worked at integrated wards or geriatric ward.
b) Nurses' clinical experience: less than 5 years of clinical experience was the majority (74.4%), and 5 to 10 years was the second (11.3%).

c) The univariate analysis showed comfort of working environment, satisfaction of working environment, importance of working, preference of working were significantly associated with self-reported geriatric care competency.

3. Supporting point #3: educational condition

a) geriatric care educational condition

b) The univariate analysis showed received geriatric care continuous education were significantly associated with self-reported geriatric care competency.

c) However, the Linear regression analysis showed only received geriatric care continuous education higher self-reported geriatric care competencies.

4. Supporting point #4: Self evaluation in geriatric care competencies

a) Geriatric care knowledge scale attitude

b) Attitude toward geriatric care scale

c) Self-reported geriatric care competency scale

d) The average score for geriatric care knowledge was 86.08 ±4.44, while the attitude test came back 62.44±5.28.

e) The score of self-reported geriatric care competency was 67.74±8.84.

B. Main Point #2 : Comprehensive geriatric assessment is used to confirm the health problems among hospitalized elderly patients objectively.

1. Supporting point #1: age

a) Nurses who were younger and worked in internal unit had better performances.

b) The data about younger nurses with better performances did not showed statistical significance in logistical regression analysis.

2. Supporting point #2: Demographics variables, working condition, geriatric care educational level, level of nursing training, nursing geriatric care knowledge which directly influence one's ability to provide health care for the elderly, attitude toward geriatric care scale and self-reported geriatric care competency scale did not showed statistical significance in logistical regression analysis. was not significantly associated with geriatric care competency objectively.

III. Conclusion

A. The study showed that nurses who scores high in the subjective tests included the geriatric care knowledge, attitude and geriatric care competencies tended to correspond with a low score in objective measures, only 17.6 percent of test takers could accurately identify the needs of their patients.
B. Nurses have accepted geriatric care continuous education bring them high confidence in geriatric care does not translate to a sizable improvement in objective measures.

C. The evidence shows that there is a huge gap between subjective perception of geriatric care competencies and the ability of geriatric care competencies in reality objectively.

First Primary Presenting Author

**Primary Presenting Author**

Wen Li Chang, BSN, RN  
College of Medicine, National Cheng Kung University.  
Department of Nursing  
Graduate student  
Tainan City  
Taiwan

**Professional Experience:** 2013~2016--Registered nurse in Ditmanson Medical Foundation Chia-Yi Christian Hospital, Chiayi, Taiwan. 2011~2013--Domestic violence and sexual assault case manager in Chiayi Health Bureau, Taiwan. 2010~2011--Registered nurse in Taichung Veterans General Hospital, Chiayi Branch ,Taiwan 2009~2010--Registered nurse in Linkou Chang Gung Memorial Hospital,Taiwan

**Author Summary:** Wen Li Chang, who concentrates on geriatric nursing and adult health nursing, is a graduate student in Department of Nursing, College of Medicine, National Cheng Kung University.

Second Secondary Presenting Author

**Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author**

Ying Ju Chang, PhD, RN  
National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan  
Department of Nursing, Institute of Allied Health Sciences, College of Medicine  
Professor  
Tainan  
Taiwan

**Professional Experience:** 2002-present Associate professor, Department of Nursing, Medical college, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan, R.O.C 2004-2010.Associate director, Nursing Department, Cheng Kung University Hospital, Tainan, Taiwan, R.O.C. Research area and publications mainly on developmental care and energy conservation of premature infants Responsible for curriculum design and education in evidence-based nursing

**Author Summary:** Ying-Ju Chang is a professor and also a director in department of nursing in National Cheng Kung University Hospital. Her previous studies focused on premature and maternal care. She also has profession in evidence based nursing. Recently, she turn to concentrate on geriatric nursing education and frailty.

Third Secondary Presenting Author

**Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author**

Fang-Wen Hu, PhD, BS, RN  
National Cheng Kung University Hospital  
Department of Nursing  
Clinical Assistant Professor

Author Summary: Fang-Wen Hu, is a clinical assistant professor in Department of Nursing National Cheng Kung University Hospital. Her studies focused on development protocols of urinary catheter insertion, delirium and functional decline in older adults. She also concentrates on geriatric nursing and nursing continuous education.