

Abstract Title: Effective Individualized Management Strategies for Cognitively Impaired Elderly on Medical/Surgical Units

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Purpose & Rationale: Inconsistent management of the cognitively impaired hospitalized patient on a medical/surgical unit is a high priority nursing challenge for all who care for older adults. Patients experience internal and external stressors that may trigger delirium. The literature shows a lack of early detection and assessment of delirium by nursing staff, lack of education for nursing staff around effective management tools, lack of focused communication, and lack of consistent family, caregiver and multidisciplinary approach.

Research Questions: What are the best practices for effective management of the cognitively impaired patient on med-surg units?

Synthesis of Review of Literature: Prevalence of delirium on medical surgical units ranges from 11-42 % and contributes to poor outcomes. Researchers have documented evidence of effective management of cognitively impaired elderly. There are no identified absolute best practices; a plan of care must be individualized.

Methods/Procedures: 1) A multidisciplinary team approach was used to identify and implement therapeutic interventions for management of cognitively impaired patients. Sensory carts were developed with activities for mild, moderate and severe delirium to:
REDUCE EXTERNAL STRESSORS

- Foster orientation
- Provide appropriate sensory
- 1:1 interaction
- Facilitate sleep
- Communicate clearly

REDUCE INTERNAL STRESSORS

- Foster familiarity
- Maximize mobility ~ meaningful – integrate all senses.
 - Nurture – dolls, stuffed animals
 - Tactile – fabric books, squeeze balls,
 - Sound/music – xylophone, bells
 - Sewing – fabric squares, lacing tiles
 - Sorting – perception – word sorter, puzzle
 - Manipulations – bead mazes, flexible cubes

and 2) formulate templates for documentation of individualized care plans.

Results: Individualized plan of care for consistency in routines is needed to help the older person with cognitive impairment feel calm and secure.

Discussion/Application to Practice: Use the NICHE program as a framework for educating staff regarding the effective management of the geriatric population in an acute care setting. Assess level of delirium upon admission and every shift to detect changes. Implementation of an individualized plan of care adapting the sensory carts and evaluate outcomes for the effective management of cognitively impaired elderly on the medical surgical units.