

Educating nurses to incorporate preventative lifestyle changes in Alzheimer's plan of care

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Oftentimes in nursing school, dementia is included in the curriculum. However, there are gaps in preventative lifestyle changes for dementia which can negatively the outcomes for these patients. Ultimately, educating nurses to have up-to-date knowledge about dementia to provide the best care for these patients will increase safety and awareness.

Introduction

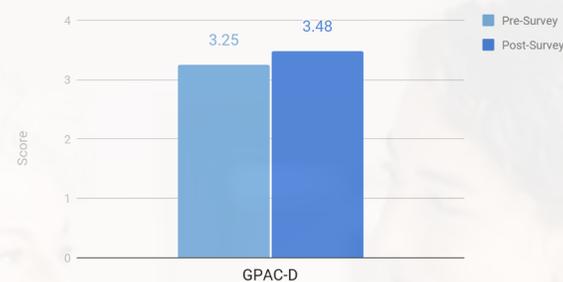
Currently, there is no curative treatment for dementia patients.

- Healthy diet, exercise, sleep, stress management, and cognitive activities lower their risks of developing dementia.
- Often nursing school curriculum focuses on the treatment of symptoms and diagnostic rather than the preventive methods of dementia through lifestyle changes.
- Because prevention is an essential component to the nursing care plan this study sought to increase nurses' knowledge of dementia through an educational intervention.

Methodology

- Design: Quantitative cross-sectional pre & posttest study
- Participants: LVN and RN nurses working in two nursing homes
- Two surveys were administered prior to the educational intervention to assess knowledge of dementia
 - Dementia Knowledge Assessment Scale (DKAS): "Causes and Characteristics " and "Risk Factors & Health Promotion" subcategories
 - The General Practitioner Attitudes and Confidence Scale for dementia (GPACS-D): Confidence portion
- An educational In-service and presentation about lifestyle changes and preventive methods of dementia was given to the nursing home nurses. Following the presentation, the same surveys were administered and collected.

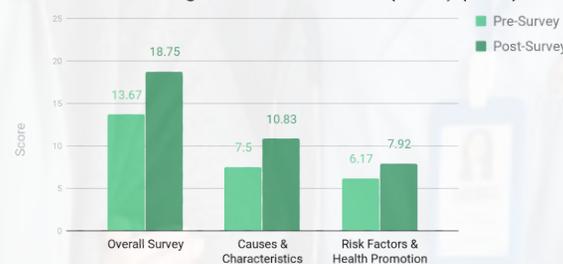
General Practitioner Attitudes and Confidence Scale for Dementia (GPACS-D) (n=9)



Category	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
GPACS-D	-.23016	.211

Results do not show a significant increase

Dementia Knowledge Assessment Scale (DKAS) (n=12)



Category	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Overall	-5.083	.000
Causes & Characteristics	-3.333	.000
Risk Factors & Health Promotion	-1.750	.063

Overall and Causes & Characteristics subcategory show significant increase at $p \geq 0.05$

Evaluation & Results

The participants (N=14) demographic information and the pre and post-survey answers were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study showed that the educational intervention significantly increased the score for the DKAS overall as well as the "Causes and Characteristics" subcategory pre-survey 7.50 (SD=2.714) and post-survey 10.83 (SD=2.588) showed significant increase at $p \geq 0.05$. However, the "Risk Factors & Health Promotion" subcategory pre-survey 6.17 (SD 2.517) and post-survey 7.92 (SD=3.147) did not show significant increase in the confidence level of the nurses following the intervention. There was no difference in nurses with longer years of experience even though they have more interactions with dementia patients and may have more knowledgeable. Ultimately, the findings of the study support the continuation of educating nurses in lifestyle changes and preventive measures of Alzheimer's disease/dementia.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Educational presentations on the importance of preventative care for AD patients is important to increase the knowledge of nurses who care for these patients. Given identified gaps in nursing curriculum, there are implications for vocational and pre-licensure nursing programs. Utilizing in-services to educate nurses on lifestyle changes and preventive measures for dementia was significant to increasing competency which ultimately impacts the safety of patients and provides interventions to support their plan of care.

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