

Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders

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THE “GREAT” KIT: ENHANCING GERIATRIC RESOURCES, EDUCATION, AND TOOLS IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

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PROBLEM: Emergency Department (ED) nurses were challenged to assess and address the specialized needs of older adults. ED nurses historically have not received educational preparation in the care of the older adults and patient satisfaction surveys identified need for improvement.

SOLUTION: Multimodal geriatric educational program to improve the care of the acutely ill older adult in the ED.

Problem Identified According to the National Center for Health Statistics (2004), persons aged 75-years-and-older have the highest ED visit rate of any age group. Older adults comprise one third of the Meridian Health Ocean Medical Center ED admissions (over 13,000 patients annually). The Emergency Nurses Association (2003) has identified the need to improve nurse knowledge of geriatric changes and the influence of these changes on the older adult’s health and response to treatment.



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Solution Formulated Multimodal geriatric educational programs have demonstrated effectiveness in improving the care of the acutely ill older adult in the ED (2008). Palemore's Facts about Aging Quiz (1998) was used to assess the knowledge of the Ocean Medical Center ED nursing staff and guide the development of the GREAT (Geriatric Resources, Education, and Tools) Kit. Geriatric focused *resources* provided to staff include the *Try This Series* and selected geriatric emergency articles, posted monthly. *Educational* programs focus on assessment of common geriatric syndromes, and management of frequently occurring emergency problems in the older adult. A *tool* kit supplies materials for nurses to provide diversion and comfort for patients (e.g., music, movies, books). (This project was supported by the Geriatric Nursing Leadership Academy, a program of Sigma Theta Tau International, and funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation.)

NICHE Role The NICHE *Evidence-Based Geriatric Nursing Protocols for Best Practice*¹ were utilized to develop the ED curriculum. The tool kit is based on information found in *Try This* (#D4) "Therapeutic Activity Kits." Nurses are provided with a copy of the protocol book as well as the *Try This* series.

Evaluation/Results The GREAT program has yielded improved patient satisfaction and improved satisfaction of the ED staff and clinical nurse specialist with age appropriate quality of care provided to older adults. Additionally, the program has facilitated the implementation of the Geriatric Clinical Scholar program (akin to the GRN program, peer geriatric experts) in the ED; three gerontological nurses certified in the ED; and an increase in the number of consultations between the ED nurses and both the geriatric clinical nurse specialist and ACE unit staff. (Research study results forthcoming.)

- For more information**
1. Aminzadeh, F. & Dalziel, W.B. (2002, March). Older adults in the emergency department: A systematic review of patterns of use, adverse outcomes, and effectiveness of interventions. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 39(3), 23 8-247.
 2. Emergency Nurses Association Position Statements and White Paper (2003). Care of Older Adults in the Emergency Setting. Available at http://www.ena.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Position%20Statements/Older_Adults_in_the_Emergency_Setting_-_ENA_PS.pdf.
 3. Glantz, C. & Richman, N. (2007). Occupation-based ability centered care for people with dementia. *OT Practice*, 10-16.
 4. National Center for Health Statistics (2004). 2002 ED Summary data from Vital and Health Statistics. Hyattsville, MD.
 5. Palemore, EB (1998). The Facts about Aging Quiz: Part 1. *The Facts about Aging Quiz*. 2nd ed. NY: Springer Publishing Company.

- NICHE-related resources**
1. Capezuti, E., Zwicker, D., Mezey, M., & Fulmer, T. (Eds.). (2008). *Evidence-based geriatric nursing protocols for best practice*, 3rd ed. Springer Publishing Company: New York.
 2. Conedera, F. & Mitchell, L. *Try This: Therapeutic Activity Kits*: Available at <http://consultgerim.org/uploads/File/trythis/theraAct.pdf>.
 3. NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurse Core Curriculum. http://nicheprogram.org/knowledge_center.

About NICHE

NICHE is a national organization designed to help health care professionals in hospitals improve the care of older adults. NICHE hospitals seek to create an environment where older adult patients receive care that results in better outcomes. This climate of success encourages patients and their families to seek NICHE designated hospitals for their medical needs. The NICHE Network now numbers nearly 300 hospitals throughout North America.

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