

Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders

NICHE



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NURSING ASSISTANT GERIATRIC TRAINING: A COLLABORATION BETWEEN AN ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTER AND A SCHOOL OF NURSING

Authors:

Suzanne Purvis, MSN, RN, GCNS

Susan M. Heidrich, PhD, RN

Kim Walker-Daniels, RN-BC, CMSRN

University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics
Madison, Wisconsin

PROBLEM: Nursing Assistants (NAs) typically do not possess the specialized knowledge required to care for older adult patients.

SOLUTION: Improve care of hospitalized older adults through specialized education of NAs.

Problem Identified Improving care and outcomes for older adult hospital patients has typically focused on increasing the knowledge and expertise of staff nurses. However, nursing assistants also provide a significant amount of patient care. NAs may not be equipped with the specialized knowledge needed to improve care of older adult patients and understand their specialized needs.



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Solution Formulated The goal of the project at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, a large, acute care academic medical center, was to improve care of older adult hospital patients through the education of NAs. The strategy employed to achieve the goal was the development of computer-based continuing education for NAs.

The project was a collaborative effort teaming the Geriatric Clinical Nurse Specialist, 26 NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurses (GRNs), and faculty and undergraduate students in the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Nursing. The group developed 25 geriatric patient care presentations. The topics for each of the presentations were randomly assigned to GRNs teamed with groups of nursing students taking a course in gerontological nursing. Each team developed a 15-minute presentation on their topic geared to the educational needs of NAs. NAs will review the presentations, evaluate the modules, and receive continuing education credits.

NICHE Role The University of Wisconsin Hospital project used the knowledge of NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurses to help create the educational tools for the training of the NAs. NICHE GRNs are prepared by the rigorous and comprehensive NICHE geriatric nursing education program. They possess the knowledge and expertise to train other staff in best practices for older hospitalized adults.

Evaluation/Results The GRNs evaluated the usefulness of the content, ease-of-use and satisfaction with the presentation format. Twenty-five successful presentations are being edited and used as resources for NA education throughout the system. Six of these have already been incorporated into a workshop for NA's as well as NA orientation.

- For more information**
1. Wertheimer, D. (2002). *The Geriatric Nursing Assistant: The Most Important Team Player - the Most Important Eyes*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Medicine.
 2. Weitzel, T., Robinson, S.B., Henderson, L., & Anderson, K. (2005). Helping Hands: CNAs in Elder Care. *Nursing Management*, 36(4), 41-46.

- NICHE-related resources**
1. Geriatric Patient Care Associate (GPCA) Curriculum. <http://elearningcenter.nicheprogram.org/course/view.php?id=28>
 2. Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN) Core Curriculum. <http://elearningcenter.nicheprogram.org/course/view.php?id=2>
 3. LaReau, R. & Lyons, D. (2010). The NICHE Staff Development Guide. In M. Boltz, J. Taylor, E. Capezuti, & T. Fulmer (Eds.), *NICHE Planning and Implementation Guide*. New York: Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing.

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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