

Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders

# NICHE



## NICHE SOLUTION #15 • 2011

### EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS TO INCREASE MEDICATION KNOWLEDGE AND SAFETY IN THE HOSPITALIZED OLDER ADULT

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**PROBLEM:** Medication management related to pain, delirium, and constipation is a significant and common challenge in caring for the hospitalized older adult.

**SOLUTION:** Increase nursing knowledge specific to delirium, uncontrolled pain, and constipation in the older adult hospital patient.

**Problem Identified** Lahey Clinic responded to current research which indicates, nationwide, that up to 50% of hospitalized older adults suffer from delirium which is often under recognized and under treated (Inouye, 2006). Among this same group, 63% have constipation and, like delirium, it is often under recognized and under treated, resulting in negative outcomes (Morrison & Meir, 2003). In addition, 80% of older adult hospital patients reportedly suffer from uncontrolled pain and indicate pain relief is inadequate (Barkin, Barkin & Barkin, 2005). The Joint Commission (2011) mandates pain assessment, reassessment, and response to interventions.



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**Solution Formulated** The NICHE team at Lahey Clinic developed a nursing education plan and identified evidence-based tools to improve medication management of delirium, uncontrolled pain, and constipation in the older adult. They developed the following needs analysis for proposed nursing education programs:

## Pain

- Treatment of chronic vs. acute pain
- Age-specific pain assessment
- Pain medication options/dosing
- Equianalgesic knowledge
- Patient education and communication

## Delirium

- Assessment of delirium
- Identification/prevention of contributing factors
- Evaluation for high-risk medications
- Pharmacological/nonpharmacological treatment

## Constipation

- Significance of constipation in older adults
- Risk factors - pharmacological/nonpharmacological
- Categories of laxatives
- Communication and documentation

E-learning initiatives for each issue were developed based on the results of the needs analysis and evidence-based tools from NICHE and other sources were provided to staff. Tools included an Equianalgesic Chart, the Confusion Assessment Method (Inouye, 2006) and Constipation Guidelines.

**NICHE ROLE** The NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurse Core Curriculum is designed for use by those at NICHE sites who train nurses in best practices for older hospitalized adults. Materials in the curriculum include evidence-based pain, delirium, constipation and medication protocols that can be used in geriatric nursing education programs such as the one developed at Lahey Clinic. The NICHE program, available to hospitals throughout North America, offers evidence-based, interdisciplinary approaches to promote positive outcomes and experiences for the hospitalized older adult.

**Evaluation/Results** The initiative resulted in increased:

- Nursing awareness of the prevalence of pain, delirium and constipation
- Patient satisfaction – Press Ganey
- Nurse response to pain – Press Ganey
- Nurse empowerment
- Multidisciplinary collaboration – medication management
- Involvement in evidence-based medication management protocols

Future plans include post-educational initiative testing to assess knowledge attainment and monitoring of delirium reporting, patient satisfaction scores, opioid reversal agents, use of evidence-based medications and adverse medication events.

## For more information

1. American Geriatrics Society (2009). American Geriatrics Society: panel on the pharmacological management of persistent pain in older persons. *Journal of American Gerontological Society*, 57, 1331-1346.
2. American Pain Society (2008). *Principles of Analgesic Use in the Treatment of Acute Pain and Cancer Pain* (6th Ed.) Glenview, IL: American Pain Society.
3. Bond, B.S. (2008). Equianalgesia: Applying evidence-based practice guidelines. *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*, 12, 527-529. doi: 10.1188/08.CJON.527-529
4. Fick, D., Cooper, J., Wade, W., Waller, J., Maclean, J., & Beers, M. (2003). Updating the Beers criteria for potentially inappropriate medication use in older adults: Results of a US consensus panel of experts [corrected] [published erratum appears in ARCH INTERN MED 2004 Feb 9;164(3):298]. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 163(22), 2716-2724. Retrieved from CINAHL Plus database.
5. Hsieh, C. (2005). Treatment of constipation in older adults. *American Family Physician*, 72(11), 2277-2284.

## NICHE-related resources

1. NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurse Core Curriculum: Age-related Changes in Health, Cognition: Depression, Delirium, Dementia; and Pain Available at NICHE Knowledge Center <http://elearningcenter.nicheprogram.org/course/view.php?id=2>
2. Horgas, A. L. & Yoon, S. L. (2008). Pain management. In E. Capezuti, D. Zwicker, M. Mezey, & T. Fulmer (Eds.) *Evidence-Based Geriatric Nursing Protocols for Best Practice* (3rd ed.) (pp. 199-222). New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.
3. Tullman, D. F., Mion, L. C., Fletcher, K., & Foreman, M. D. (2008). Delirium: Prevention, early recognition, and treatment. In E. Capezuti, D. Zwicker, M. Mezey, & T. Fulmer (Eds.) *Evidence-Based Geriatric Nursing Protocols for Best Practice* (3rd ed.) (pp. 111-125). New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.
4. Tullman, D. F., Mion, L. C., Fletcher, K., & Foreman, M. D. (2008). Oral hydration management. In E. Capezuti, D. Zwicker, M. Mezey, & T. Fulmer (Eds.) *Evidence-Based Geriatric Nursing Protocols for Best Practice* (3rd ed.) (pp. 337-351). New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.

## 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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