

Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders



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RAPID RESPONSE FOR DEMENTIA AND BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

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PROBLEM: Acute changes in behavior related to suspected delirium, dementia and/or psychiatric conditions.

SOLUTION: A designated team of specially trained professional associates designed to assist adult inpatient non-critical care units with assessment and treatment of behavioral conditions.

Problem Identified Care of hospitalized older patients experiencing delirium accounts for more than 49% of all hospital days and delirium complicates hospital stays for at least 20% of the 12.5 million patients 65-years-of-age or older who are hospitalized each year (Inouye, 2006). Typically, delirium results in emotional disturbances characterized by fear, paranoia, anxiety, depression, irritability, apathy, anger and euphoria. Older adult patients with dementia and primary psychiatric conditions are also prone to acute changes in behavior.



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Solution Formulated The NICHE staff at St. John Hospital and Medical Center created the “Behavioral Health Rapid Response Team” (BHRRT) designed to quickly assess and treat behavioral conditions, such as delirium, in patients in non-critical care units. Each team includes a:

- Crisis Prevention Intervention trained RN
- Designated physician or mid-level provider (MLP)
- Other professional staff at the discretion of the team

Any professional healthcare associate that has an immediate concern for a patient’s condition/behavior can initiate the BHRRT by calling 611. The BHRRT RN is contacted via pager and arrives on the unit within ten minutes, followed by the rest of the team.

In action, the BHRRT goals are to de-escalate the situation while avoiding use of restraint, and assist the patient in initially regaining baseline functioning. The team also acts to obtain the patient’s cooperation with the plan of care. To achieve these immediate goals, the team uses the BHRRT “Algorithm,” a sequence of interventions formulated to manage the physical and physiological causes of the behavioral condition.

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 hospitalized older adults. During hospitalization, the nurse is in a unique position to screen for delirium and other behavioral conditions as well as develop interdisciplinary care plans to address them, such as those included in the BHRRT “Algorithm.” 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 In the first year, there were 17 BHRRTs initiated. Of these, eight occurred on day shift, four on afternoon shift, and five on the midnight shift. The BHRRT was activated eight times for behavioral changes, eight times for dementia patients, and once for ETOH withdrawal. All were safely managed on the unit and staff implemented individualized treatment plans. The NICHE staff at St. John Hospital and Medical Center continues to refine metrics collection techniques and audit tool.

For more information

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2. Fick, D., Kolanowski, A., Waller, J., & Inouye, S.K. (2005). Delirium superimposed on dementia in a community-living managed care population: A three year retrospective study of prevalence, costs, and utilization. *Journals of Gerontology: Medical Sciences*, 60A(6), 748-753.
3. Inouye, S.K. (2006). Delirium in older persons. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 354(11), 1157-1165.

NICHE-related resources

1. Depression, Delirium, and Dementia. Geriatric Resource Nurse Training Program. (Available at NICHE Knowledge Center, accessed via www.nicheprogram.org).
2. Fick, D., & Mion, L. (2005). Assessing delirium in persons with dementia. Geriatric Nursing Hartford Foundation Try This Dementia Series. Available at: <http://www.hartfordnig.org/resources/education/tryThis.html>
3. Tullmann, DF, Mion, Lc, Lorraine, FAAN, Kathleen Fletcher, K, Marquis D. Foreman, MD/ (2008). Delirium: Prevention, early recognition, and treatment. In Capezuti, E., Zwicker, D., Mezey, M., & Fulmer, T. (Eds.). *Evidence-based geriatric nursing protocols for best practice*, 3rd ed. Springer Publishing Company: New York.

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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