

## Critical Care Nursing of Older Adults

### Overview

The educational series, Critical Care Nursing of Older Adults, provides evidence-based guidelines for nurse clinicians working with older adults in critical care, step-down-units, and trauma and emergency departments. NICHE created the course in response to the fact that older adults overwhelmingly represent the majority of patients receiving critical care worldwide. Content is based on the book, *Critical Care Nursing of Older Adults Best Practices* (3rd ed.), edited by M. D. Foreman, K. Milisen, and T. Fulmer (published by Springer Publishing Company, 2010). Marie Boltz, PhD, GNP, BC, is the editor of the course. Julie Davey, MSN, RN, APRN, BC, served as consultant.

### Features & Benefits

**The educational series modules provide clinicians with the following guidance:**

**Feature:** Understand the context for critical care nursing of older adults.

**Benefit:** Support the older adult's recovery and promote improved long-term functional status.

**Feature:** Recognize infection, sepsis, and immune function in older adults.

**Benefit:** Manage and mitigate infections in older adult patients

**Feature:** Understand and manage sleep disorders in older adult patients in the ICU.

**Benefit:** Promote quality sleep patterns in the older adult patient.

**Feature:** Use best nursing practice for the critically ill older patient with heart failure.

**Benefit:** Promote comfort of the older adult experiencing heart failure.

**Feature:** Understand acute respiratory failure and mechanical ventilation in the older adult.

**Benefit:** Promote comfort of the older adult experiencing respiratory failure.

**Feature:** Understand delirium in critical illness.

**Benefit:** Help prevent and manage delirium in older adult patients.

### Applications

Designed for clinicians working with older adults in critical care, step-down-units, and trauma and emergency departments.

## NICHE PORTFOLIO



### Support Resources

- **Need to Know by NICHE Series:** Communication
- **Solutions 4:** The "Great" Kit: Enhancing Geriatric Resources, Education, and Tools in the Emergency Department
- **Solutions 10:** Creating a Continuum of Care for Older Adults: Senior Emergency Center
- **NICHE Online Connect Webinar:** Focus on Restraints
- **Try This Issue 13:** Confusion Assessment Method (CAM)
- **Try This Issue 25:** Confusion Assessment Method for the Intensive Care Unit (CAM-ICU)
- **NICHE Network News:** The Critical Care File
- **NICHE "Evidence-Based Geriatric Nursing Protocols for Best Practice" Book (4th Edition, 2012).** New York: Springer Publishing

## Critical Care Nursing of Older Adults

### NICHE Hospital Innovation

#### Environmental and Social Approaches to Improve Outcomes for the Hospitalized Older Adult

**Author:** Sandra Wright RN, BSN, MS, Clinical Manager, The Christ Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio

The 28-bed, NICHE - Gerontology unit of Christ Hospital used a series of environmental and social interventions to improve patient outcomes, specifically patient satisfaction, safety and falls. The interventions were identified by staff and champions helped with the implementation.

#### Environmental interventions included:

- Installation of signs reminding patients to call for assistance getting to the bathroom
- Coloring the call light to improve visibility
- Raising the toilet seat
- Fall risk and other key points in care identified on white boards

Also, use of an electronic medical record with computer physician order entry and bar code medication administration was implemented.

#### Social interventions included:

- Including the patient and family on daily rounds
- Intensive volunteer involvement with patients
- Implementation of the SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, and Recommendation) method of standardizing communication

#### Results

Over a twelve-month period from June 2008 to June 2009, the Press Ganey patient satisfaction scores increased from 82% to 86%. There was an 84-day period of time without any falls. Overall, the incidence of falls decreased by 25%. The coordinated interventions program stimulated overall improvement of outcomes on the unit. All members of the nursing staff were involved and accepted the challenge of finding other smaller approaches that, when combined with the program efforts, improved patient safety.

#### REFERENCES

- Hart, B., Birkas, J., Lachmann, M., & Saunders, L. (2002). Promoting positive outcomes for elderly persons in the hospital: Prevention and risk factor modification. *AACN Clinical Issues*, 13(1), 22-33.
- Thornlow, D.K., Anderson, R., & Oddone, E. (2009). Cascade iatrogenesis: factors leading to the development of adverse events in hospitalized older adults. *Int J Nurs Studies*, 46 (11):1528-35.

**View the Critical Care Nursing of Older Adults course. These resources are available only to NICHE member organizations.**

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