Pain Assessment and Management in Elderly

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Triggers

- The need for pain management increases as the elderly population increase
- By 2030, nearly one in five Americans will be aged 65 and older
- “It is the lack of knowledge and other factors that have contributed to the situation where elderly people live in nursing homes with chronic, unrelieved pain (Higgins, Madir & Walton, 2004)”
- The focus is to ensure appropriate pain management based on resident’s description of pain and notify health care providers prior to advance in levels of pain

PICO

- P: Elderly residents at Palolo Chinese Home
- I: Educate about pain in elderly residents
- C: Pre-assessment vs. post assessment of resident’s current knowledge of pain and pain management
- O: To increase awareness in pain management in elderly residents.
- PICO question: Does education to elderly residents about pain increase awareness and involvement in their pain management?

Priority for Organization

The purpose of this research is to improve pain assessment and provide current best practice in pain management in elderly residents at Palolo Chinese Home.

Team

A team was formed of two senior level nursing students at Chaminade University of Honolulu currently enrolled in Evidence-based practice course. The evidence-based topic was chosen due to the assigned clinical immersion site. Both team members participated in all aspects of the project.

Literature

Database searches: CINAHL, Google Scholar, Joanna Briggs, Medline, National Guideline Clearinghouse and EBSCO

Keywords searched: Pain, Discomfort, Pain management, Chronic pain, Characteristics of pain, Descriptions of pain, Assessment tools, Elderly, Geriatrics, Older Adults, Long Term Care, and Nursing Home

- Evidence show a lack of knowledge in the elderly on pain management treatment other than pain medication
- A significant gap exists between how care providers assess and manage pain compared to current best practice guidelines.
- Pain management is inadequately controlled due to the existence of comorbidities and the increased incidence of side effects related to treatment regimen. The lack of pain management can affect quality of life, functional ability, and general well-being in the elderly and can lead to further health problems such as depression, decreased mobility, and sleep disturbances.
- Pain assessments may be difficult to complete due to disorientation, confusion, communication deficits.
- Pain management success rate increase with the use of pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatment.
- Pain management may be influenced by nurses’ perceptions or lack of self-awareness.
- Effective assessment tools and proper evaluation of pain is essential for successful pain management.

Guideline Development

- The guideline development is adapted from the National Clearinghouse Guideline as followed:
  - To establish common definitions for terms used in pain management
  - To promote the health, safety and welfare of residents in nursing facilities, assisted living, residential health care facilities, and adult health services, by establishing guidelines for the assessment, monitoring, and management of pain
  - To provide professional staff with standards of practice that will assist them in the effective assessment, monitoring, and management of the resident's pain
  - To educate the resident, family, and staff
  - To limit liability of health care providers

(Palolo Chinese Home, 2011)

Implementation Plan

- Create pre and post assessment questionnaire
- Create educational handout
- Educate elderly residents about pain and pain management

Implementation

- Pre and Post assessments
- Resident education about pain
- Provided handouts about pain
- In-service to health care providers
- Developed pain assessment tool for health care providers

Pre assessment Questionnaire

- What is your definition of pain?
- Do you have pain?
- If yes, rate your pain 0-10
- Location of the pain
- Do you notify health care provider when you have pain?
- What do health care provider do other than medication?
- When you take medication, is it effective?
- What would you want the nurses to do other than giving medication?
- Do you think pain is normal process of aging?

Post assessment Questionnaire

- When do you notify the health care provider when you experience pain?
- How do you verbalize your pain?
- What other methods would you use to relieve pain?
- Is pain normal process of aging?

Process & Outcome Results

After research on pain management and observations of the facility, we found the need for educating the health care providers in thorough pain assessment and management. We developed pain assessment tools and provided in-service to the health care providers in the facility.

Pre assessment Results

- “Sore”, “Hurt”, “Pain”, “Stiff”, and “Ache”
- 50% of the residents who had pain verbalized their pain
- 100% of the residents who had pain verbalized their pain level as greater than 5.
- Leg, Knee, Arm, Hip and Back Pain
- 60% of the resident verbalizes to the health care provider when they experience pain
- 100% of the resident stated that they get pain medications
- 90% of the resident stated that medications has been effective
- 100% of the residents interviewed believed that pain is part of aging process

Post assessment Results

- 90% of the residents interviewed stated that they will notify health care provider prior to advanced rate of pain
- 20% of the residents requested heat/cold therapy, 50% of the residents requested that medications exist
- 100% of the residents interviewed stated that pain is not normal process of aging

Institutionalization

Palolo Chinese Home has pain assessment tools that follow current evidence-based practice in pain management. However, further education of health care providers and the elderly population is needed for effective pain management.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the facility for giving us the opportunity to complete our evidence-based practice project.