

Utilizing Experiential Teaching Strategies to Reduce the Incidence of Falls in Patients in Orthopedic Wards

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Abstract : Background: Most orthopedic inpatients and primary caregivers are elderly, and patients are at high risk of falls. We set up a quality control team to analyze the root cause and found the following issues: 1. The nursing staff did not conduct cognitive assessments of patients and their primary caregivers to ensure that health education content was understood. 2. Nurses prefer to use spoken language in health education but lack the skills to use diverse teaching materials. 3. Newly recruited nurses have insufficient awareness of fall prevention. Methods: The study subjects were 16 nurses in the orthopedic ward of a teaching hospital in central Taiwan. We implemented the following strategies: 1. Developed a fall simulation teaching plan and conducted teaching courses and assessments in the morning meeting; 2. Designed and used a "fall prevention awareness card" to improve the prevention awareness of elderly patients; 3. All staff (including new staff) received experiential education training. Results: In 2021, 40% of patients in the orthopedic wards were aged 60-79 years (792/1979) with a high risk of falls. According to data collection, the incidence of falls in hospitalized patients was 0.04% (5/12651), which exceeded the threshold of 0.02% in our ward. After completing the on-the-job education training in October, the nursing staff expressed that they were more aware of the special situation of fall prevention. Through practical sharing and drills, combined with experiential teaching strategies, nurses can reconstruct the safety awareness of fall prevention and deepen their cognitive memory. Participants scored between 30 and 80 on the pretest (16 students, mean: 72.6) and between 90 and 100 on the post-test (16 students, mean: 92.6), resulting in a 73.8% improvement in overall scores. We have a total of 4 new employees who have all completed the first 3 months of compulsory PGY courses. From January to April 2022, the incidence of falls in hospitalized patients was 0.025% (1/3969). We have made good improvements and will continue to track the outcome. Discussion: In addition to enhancing the awareness of falls among nursing staff, how-to guide patients and primary caregivers to prevent falls is also the focus of improvement. The proper way of health education can be better understood through practical exercises and case sharing.

Keywords : experiential teaching strategies, fall prevention, cognitive card, elderly patients, orthopedic wards

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