Reducing Falls in Memory Care through Implementation of the Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, and Injuries Program

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Abstract : Falls among the elderly population has become an area of concern in healthcare today. The negative impacts of falls lead to increased morbidity, mortality, and financial burdens for both patients and healthcare systems. Falls in the United States is reported at an annual rate of 36 million in those aged 65 and older. Each year, one out of four people in this age group will suffer a fall, with 20% of these falls causing injury. The setting for this Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) project was a memory care unit in an assisted living community, as these facilities house cognitively impaired older adults. These communities lack fall prevention programs; therefore, the need exists to add to the body of knowledge to positively impact this population. The objective of this project was to reduce fall rates through the implementation of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) STEADI (stopping elderly accidents, deaths, and injuries) program. The DNP project performed was a quality improvement pilot study with a pre and post-test design. This program was implemented in the memory care setting over 12 weeks. The project included an educational session for staff and a fall risk assessment with appropriate resident referrals. The three aims of the DNP project were to reduce fall rates among the elderly aged 65 and older who reside in the memory care unit, increase staff knowledge of STEADI fall prevention measures after an educational session, and assess the willingness of memory care unit staff to adopt an evidence-based a fall prevention program. The Donabedian model was used as a guiding conceptual framework for this quality improvement pilot study. The fall rate data for 12 months before the intervention was evaluated and compared to post-intervention fall rates. The educational session comprised of a pre and post-test to assess staff knowledge of the fall prevention program and the willingness of staff to adopt the fall prevention program. The overarching goal was to reduce falls in the elderly population who live in memory care units. The results of the study showed, on average that the fall rate during the implementation period of STEADI ($\mu=6.79$) was significantly lower when compared to the prior 12 months ($\mu= 9.50$) ($p=0.02$, $\alpha = 0.05$). The mean staff knowledge scores improved from pretest ($\mu=77.74\%$) to post-test ($\mu=87.42\%$) ($p=0.00$, $\alpha= 0.05$) after the education session. The results of the willingness to adopt a fall prevention program were scored at 100%. In summation, implementing the STEADI fall prevention program can assist in reducing fall rates for residents aged 65 and older who reside in a memory care setting.
Keywords : dementia, elderly, falls, STEADI

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