TRAINING LONG TERM CARE NURSING STAFF TO IMPROVE THEIR
RESPONSE TO RESIDENTS WITH DEMENTIA

ABSTRACT

Residents living out their diagnosis of Alzheimer’s dementia or related dementia’s in long-term care creates a unique challenge for nursing staff caring for these residents. Providing education and training to nursing staff about Alzheimer’s dementia and related dementia’s (ADRD) has increased nursing staff knowledge of dementia and improved nursing staff attitude and confidence in their response when managing ADRD residents and their potentially challenging behaviors. Training nursing staff how to recognize and respond to challenging behavior, such as agitation, with non-pharmacological approaches, to include the appropriate use of antipsychotic medications, after exhausting non-pharmacological interventions, has shown to be beneficial in the care of these residents. Effective training enables nursing staff to respond well to residents experiencing symptoms of Alzheimer’s dementia and related dementia’s, and provide patient centered care. Those nursing staff not trained, felt ill prepared to care for the dementia resident. Specific training needed to be available for nursing staff in order for them to provide the best care to the dementia resident. This need for training warranted the implementation of this quality improvement project. In this manuscript the DNP student will discuss the use of a training module designed to train nursing staff about Alzheimer’s dementia and related dementias, how to recognize and manage challenging behaviors, such as agitation, non-pharmacological interventions to address those behaviors, and the appropriate use of antipsychotic medications. Nursing staff (n=151), from one long term care facility participated in pre intervention data collection, the
training module, and then one and two month post intervention data collection. As well, residents with a dementia diagnosis and an as needed for agitation antipsychotic order, were identified (n=24). Changes in nursing staff attitudes, knowledge, and confidence were evaluated. Additionally, the number of resident agitated behaviors were evaluated along with the number of as needed antipsychotics that were administered by nursing staff. Results indicate significant improvement in nursing staff knowledge and confidence, a significant reduction in the number of as needed antipsychotics administered by nursing staff.