Interdisciplinary Geriatric Difficult Case Conference: Innovative Approach to Learning

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Identification of Need
• There is a shortage of geriatric prepared providers to care for a complex aging population
• Participating hospital systems have > 50 hospital days caring for patients 65 or older
• There is a lack of communication and awareness of services across the continuum of care
• Primary Clinics, Emergency departments, Acute Care, Long Term Care, and Home Care needs to work together to provide better transitions for patients
• Chief Nursing Operators struggle with budget constraints to educate staff in care of the older adult

Components
• Framework: Wisconsin Star Method: www.wspi.org
• Monthly scheduled Interdisciplinary Geriatric Difficult Case Conference Call
• Identification of proposed case
• Utilize standard case template
• Teleconferencing technology
• Involvement of geriatric expert for teaching points
• Scripted call facilitation template

Wisconsin Star Method
• The Wisconsin Star Method is based upon principles of heuristics, cognitive science, information visualization, ecological interface design, team functioning, and networking technology
• Consists of a “low tech” graphic user interface—a small 5-pointed star drawn on a clear surface (paper or whiteboard). It enables clinical data about a person to be mapped out onto a single field with five domains: medications, medical, behavioral, personal, and social

Goals & Measurement
• Elevate the level of geriatric care in the state
• Provide accessible and affordable forum of education
• Discuss challenging geriatric cases in order to learn from the interdisciplinary team
• Participant evaluation survey via email

Dissemination/Promotion/Hardwiring
• Monthly conference calls held same day each month
• Rotating accountability for geriatric expert and case submission
• Teleconferencing technology via Webex to provide visual of Wisconsin STAR method and teaching points
• Participants receive email with call dates and conference line details
• Attendance promoted by leadership

Interdisciplinary Collaboration
Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare
Aurora Health Care
Collaborating to provide real time education with real patient cases in an innovative approach to education

Literature Review
• 1 in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia
• Wisconsin’s disease is the most expensive condition in the nation
• 2 out of 3 older Americans have multiple chronic health conditions
• Treatment for this population accounts for 66% of the country’s health care budget
• Older adults 65 or older have the smallest percentage of people with proficient health literacy skills and the largest percentage with “below basic” health literacy skills
• Caring for complex older adults may discourage & disengage care providers
• Innovative effective teaching strategies to teach interdisciplinary teams can be effective use of resources

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Evaluation
• Monthly post call debriefing with committee to review
• Participant satisfaction survey first six months of implementation
• Long term, monitor inpatient length of stay and Emergency department admissions/readmissions
• 95% of participants STRONGLY AGREE:
  • They have a deeper understanding of managing challenging behaviors
  • Teaching points were helpful
  • Participating in call will help them do better in their job
• Will recommend Interdisciplinary Geriatric Difficult Case call to their colleagues

Lesson’s Learned
• Collaborating across healthcare systems is fun!
• Frequent telephone updates with committee helps keep process going
• Annual schedule with rotating responsibilities to arrange for a case study, presenter, and geriatric expert
• Being flexible and supportive within committee is important
• Identifying committee’s individual and group expertise helpful in project planning
• Securing system site leadership for support and inviting professionals to participate is helpful!

References

Acknowledgement
The authors would like to acknowledge Holly Anderson, Margie Hackbart, Margie Hackbart, Beth Knister, Lori Koeppel, Sara Kruskick, Dr. Richard London, Sigrid Lubner, Dr. Michael Malone, Dr. Jerry MacKee, Evelyn Mindich, Amber Sopilo, Dr. Coryn Sary, and Anne Willikowski for their contribution to this project.

NICHE Conference 2015