A NURSE DRIVEN URINARY CATHETER REMOVAL PROTOCOL

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PROBLEM: Indwelling urinary catheters were often used without adequate indication, posing significant safety risk.

SOLUTION: Create a nurse-driven protocol to decrease the use of indwelling urinary catheters by 50%.

Problem Identified The use of indwelling urinary catheters in acute and transitional care settings is often inappropriate and associated with risks, including catheter associated urinary tract infections (CA-UTI), increased health care costs, patient discomfort, increased morbidity/mortality, dignity issues and mobility/ambulation issues.

Indwelling urinary catheters are misused for several reasons including: 1) convenience, to manage urinary incontinence; 2) lack of knowledge of risks associated with use and alternative treatments; 3) physicians not tracking continued use; and 4) lack of valid continence assessment tools for the older adult population (Georgiou, 2001). Unfortunately, educational initiatives have often traditionally focused on incontinence products, including indwelling urinary catheters, rather than continence promotion strategies (Arwin, 2000).
NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) is an international program designed to help hospitals and healthcare organizations improve care of older adults. The mission of NICHE is to provide principles and tools to stimulate a change in the culture of healthcare facilities to achieve patient-centered care for older adults. NICHE, based at NYU College of Nursing, consists of hospitals and healthcare facilities in the U.S., Canada and Bermuda. For more information visit nicheprogram.org.

For more information

NICHE-related resources

Evaluation/Results
As a result of the program, initially there was a sharp decrease in the number of urinary catheters. After several months, the number of urinary catheters decreased but remained constant. The catheters being used all had medical justification documented in the medical record. An unanticipated positive result of the protocol has been no CAUTI’s in the past 30 months.

NICHE Role
The NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN) core curriculum is designed for use by those at NICHE sites who train nurses in best practices for hospitalized older adults. GRNs are the foundation of system-wide improvement to achieve positive outcomes for hospitalized older adults. The NICHE program, available to hospitals throughout North America, offers evidence-based, interdisciplinary approaches to promote improved care for the hospitalized older adult.

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