USE OF THE BEST PRACTICE TEAM FOR THE CARE OF OLDER ADULTS

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PROBLEM: Care of older adult patients requires staff expertise and clinical practices that acknowledge their specialized needs.

SOLUTION: An inter-professional team guides the development, implementation and evaluation of quality initiatives designed to improve the outcomes and experiences of hospitalized older adults and their families.

Problem Identified Acute care nursing has traditionally focused on treating the acute problem that led to admission, rather than preventive, aging-sensitive interventions. The bedside nurse is typically challenged by a lack of educational and operational resources to prevent and manage “geriatric syndromes” such as infection, delirium, falls and adverse drug events.
A Best Practice Team for the Care of Older Adults was formed at St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital to respond to the needs of older adult patients. This inter-professional team focused on five areas:

- Improving the geriatric care knowledge base
- Reducing the prevalence of sepsis
- Reducing the incidence of delirium
- Reducing falls and fall-related injuries
- Improving medication reconciliation processes and decreasing the incidence of polypharmacy

NICHE Role

NICHE provides extensive resources to help address the focus areas of the St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital’s initiatives including core gerontologic curricula for the interdisciplinary team and evidence-based protocols and operational tools.

Evaluation/Results

Some of the team accomplishments to date include:

- Implemented the 2008 Surviving Sepsis Campaign (SSC) Guidelines with improvements in cost and outcomes
- Developed a research study to test a delirium prevention bundle
- Secured grant monies to develop a Geriatric Resource Nurse Workshop
- Organized monthly geriatric education programs for licensed, unlicensed and medical staff
- Reduced Acetaminophen toxicity and improved prescribing practices for older adults
- Instituted a hospital-wide multidisciplinary educational initiative addressing the Beers criteria

For more information


NICHE-related resources

1. ConsultgeriRN website. Available at: http://consultgeri.org/topics/sleep/need_help_stat/
2. Geriatric Interdisciplinary Team (GITT) Program website http://hartfordign.org/Resources/gitt_program/

About NICHE

NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) is an international program designed to help hospitals and healthcare organizations improve care of older adults. The vision of NICHE is for all patients 65-and-over to be given sensitive and exemplary care. 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.

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