"Dolls for Dementia" Minimizing Behavioral Unrest Associated with Dementia
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|• To minimize the behavioral disorders associated with dementia, nursing students began “Dolls for Dementia”.  
• The purpose of Dolls for dementia is to promote a caring and safe environment for patients with Dementia in the hospital setting utilizing doll therapy. | We discussed the project with our professor then met with the student nursing club at Georgian Court University. Agreement was reached to have a drive for doll collection “Dolls for Dementia”. The Student Activities Director, did approve the project. Flyers were developed which were posted throughout the university, on social media, and an email blast to the entire student body. One bin was placed outside of the campus library for ease of accessibility for all students. | After one month of collection, forty dolls were collected, five dolls were not eligible for distribution and will be donated to another cause. A total of thirty five dolls will be donated and evenly distributed to the five NICHE units at Meridian Health. |

**Purpose of Doll Therapy**
Doll therapy in that it is to provide comfort, decrease anxiety and agitation. Very often patients believe they are in an earlier stage of life and in order to meet the needs of attachment and nurturing dolls and stuffed animals are often used. In doing so, communication, interaction and care giving are often provided with less resistance.

**Precipitating factors**
During clinical rotation, GCU students cared for a patient with advanced dementia who had a doll with her at all times. The students had not encountered this before. A discussion was held in post conference on the use of doll therapy. Students inquired as to where the dolls were kept in the hospital and they were told that dolls are not a stock item. The students felt strongly that this should be a readily available intervention if appropriate and wanted to ensure availability for patients.

**Goal**
The Overall Goal of the Project was to obtain new dolls that could be donated to the Hackensack Meridian Health Hospitals NICHE units where the nursing students had clinical experiences.

**Comparison**
Not having available items for distraction purposes for patients with dementia. Patients are at greater risk for resisting care and potential behaviors that are not conducive to care.

**Outcome**
Feedback from nursing staff from NICHE units:
• “We love the dolls, when will we get more?  
• Our patients became much calmer when we used the dolls  
• “It was great to have tools readily available – normally we do not have items such as this.”  
• We look forward to getting more every year!

**Reflection**
As a clinical group we are proud of our contribution we made to enhance the care of the elder adult.

**Next steps**
Nursing Club Students are working together with the entire student body to collect dolls in the Spring of 2017 to once again distribute among the hospital facilities.

**Selected references**