



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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Mouth Care Nursing Protocol for Palliative Care Patients

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Introduction

Mouth care is a crucial aspect in palliative care nursing. It does not only promote comfort and prevent oral complications, it also helps to maintain self-esteem, improve communication, and quality of life for patients with advance illnesses (NHS Scotland, 2014). The routine mouth care may not be able to address the specific conditions of mouth care problems affecting palliative patients. Therefore, there is genuine need to develop evidence-based nursing protocol on mouth care for palliative care patients.

Objectives

1. Search for evidence-based practice in oral assessment and nursing care suitable for palliative patients.
2. Develop mouth care nursing protocol for palliative patients.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the protocol.

Methodology

Firstly, a survey on the condition of palliative care patients was conducted to obtain a baseline understanding of the current situation. Secondly, a data based search in Medline, CIHNAL, EMBASE, Joanna Briggs was performed to look for evidence in mouth care for palliative care patients. Lastly, a nursing protocol in mouth care for palliative patients was developed based on the evidence searched. Thereafter, an assessment of staff knowledge on mouth care would be performed before and after training of the new nursing protocol.

Result

A survey on mouth condition of patients in three palliative care wards was conducted in July 2015. There were 72 subjects. The patients' mouth condition was assessed using the Oral Health Assessment Tool. The result demonstrated presence of dry mouth in more than 30% of the sample and suboptimal cleanliness in 21% of the sample. A quiz of 14 questions testing nurses' knowledge in mouth care was performed in December. Twenty-two nurses responded (60% of all RN & EN). Only 14% of the nurses got two-third of the questions correct. These results demonstrated an inadequacy of nursing knowledge in mouth care and the need for a protocol to guide their practice. The mouth care nursing protocol was developed and would be implemented in January, 2016. An audit of the mouth condition of the patients would

be conducted three months after the implementation. A good compliance to the mouth care protocol is important to maintain a healthy mouth condition and prevent development of mouth problems.