Effects of the AIICE program on communication between patients with dementia and nurses in long term-care facilities

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Background

Elderly people in Taiwan consisted of 10.76% of the total population, among this number more than 6% are suffering from dementia. With the progressive decline in cognition, patients with dementia gradually lose the ability to remember, think, and learn. Impaired memory and language skills caused by cognitive decline interfere with effective communication and may result in development of disruptive behavior and inappropriate behaviors. In hence, effective communication with patients who have dementia not only can identify their behavioral problems to satisfy their needs, but also promote the quality of patient care and decrease nurses’ stress and turnover rate in long-term care.

Purpose

The purpose of this study were to evaluate the effects of the Advanced Innovative Internet-Based Communication Education (AIICE) program on nurses’ communication knowledge, attitudes, and performance when communicating with patients who have dementia; and to evaluate whether patients’ behavior and psychological symptoms (BPSD) and depressive symptom improved.

Methods

A quasi-experimental research design with one group repeated-measures was conducted. Convenient sampling was used to recruit 107 nurses from long term care facilities in Southern part of Taiwan.

Communication Knowledge Scale, Communications Attitudes Scale, Patients’ Receptive and Expressive Ability Assessment Scale, Communication Performance Scale, Memory and Behavior Problems Checklist, and Cornell Scale for Depression in Dementia were used to measure outcomes of nurses and patients.

Data were analyzed by Mixed models to compare changes over baseline and 4-week and 16-week follow-up tests on the measurement variables.

Results

Totally, 105 nurses completed the study and were involved in data analysis. Results indicated that nurses’ communication knowledge, assessment ability and performance were significantly improved at 4-week and 16-week follow-up tests compared to that of the baseline (p = .00, .01, .01) while their communication attitudes showed no significant improvement over follow-up tests (p=.40). Findings also indicated that patients’ depressive symptom decreased significantly at 16-week follow-up test (p = .05) but their BPSD remained no change.

Conclusions

Findings of this study demonstrated that the AIICE program is beneficial to improve nurses’ communication knowledge, assessment ability, and performance; and to alleviate patients’ depressive symptoms. Future continuous communication training program in considering the internet-based strategies is to be encouraged so as to improve quality of care for patients with dementia.

References


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