The development and psychometric testing of a dementia care competence instrument for nurses working in acute care settings

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Background: In-patients with cognitive impairment presenting non-cognitive neuropsychiatric symptoms (BPSD) are exceedingly common and challenge care providers in acute care settings. Yet, nurses working in hospitals often face difficulties in dealing with such symptoms. Education and training relevant to competence of care is important. Before it, an assessment instrument for dementia care competences of nursing staff in acute hospital is needed for planning for future staff education.

Purpose: This study aimed to develop a Dementia Care Competence (DCC) scale and to test its psychometrics among nurses working in acute hospitals.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was used to develop and test the DCC-acute care instrument. Two phases have been conducted to develop and test the instrument: 1. instrument development; 2. Validation of psychometric properties of the DCC-acute care instrument. Through literature review and individual interviews, items were developed. Then, the content validity index (CVI) was evaluated by experts including one dementia clinician, 3 head nurses and two professors who were experts of dementia care. Nurse’ were included who met the following criteria: (1) nursing staff (i.e. registered nurses) working in acute hospital, (2) working over than 6 month(3) the unit include general ward, geriatric ward, psychiatric ward; exclude outpatient department, home care, intensive care unit. Then, a total of 300 nurses were recruited from two teaching hospitals in Taiwan between March and May in 2017. Internal consistency and test-retest reliability were estimated through Cronbach’s alpha and intra-class correlation coefficient respectively.

Results: An initial 65-item scale was developed and went through the expert evaluation, a total of 40 items with the CVI of 0.97 among experts was finalized. Internal consistency analysis indicated the Cronbach’s alpha of .503 in knowledge, .465 in skills, and .810 in attitude. Test-retest reliability with 2-week interval indicated the intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) of .818 in overall scale, .854 in knowledge, .741 in attitude, and .642 in skill.

Conclusions: In this study, the DCC-acute care instrument can be a potentially reliable and valid scale to measure dementia care competence which may contribute to educational planning for nurses working in acute care settings.
Keywords: dementia care competence, nurse, acute care setting