IMPROVING NURSES’ KNOWLEDGE OF HEART FAILURE EDUCATION PRINCIPLES

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Purpose: To describe a unit based project to evaluate nurses’ knowledge on heart failure education principles.

Background: Heart failure (HF) is the number one reason for discharge from a VA medical center. Almost half (46%) of patients with heart failure are hospitalized each year as a secondary diagnosis and 20% are admitted with heart failure as the primary diagnosis. In 2011 approximately 2.2% of the total VA population had a diagnosis of HF. Veterans must be adequately educated on self-management and share responsibility and accountability for the management of the disease with their providers. Providers need to be knowledgeable of the key components of managing HF to assure the Veteran receives accurate and practical information. The literature reports a disconnection between what nurses teach and what heart failure patients need to know.

Specific Aim: to evaluate and compare the current state of nurses’ knowledge of heart failure self-management education principles on an inpatient cardiology unit at a VA medical center.

Methods: A pretest posttest was used to evaluate nurses’ knowledge on one pilot unit. The pretest was followed by an educational session that included key evidenced-based components of HF education which included patient self-management and area specific survey results.

Results: A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of an education session on RN scores on the RN Knowledge of Heart Failure Education Principles survey. There was a statistically significant increase in the overall mean scores from pretest to posttest.

Implications to Nursing: Results of this small pilot study suggest that there may be a knowledge gap between what education nurses are providing and what is needed by Veterans with HF.