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Effects of *Art from the Heart* on Nurse Satisfaction and Patient Well-being

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INTRODUCTION

High patient to nurse ratios lead to decreased job satisfaction and increased burnout, which affects quality of care.¹ Burnout is a significant problem in the nursing community, which is up to four times greater than average for all US workers.¹ Nursing social competency is necessary for listening, empathy, making time for patients, behavior and attitudes.²

Art programming has been shown to positively affect unit culture, quality of care and nursing practice.³ It increases well-being, reduces stress, and enhances nurse-patient communication by promoting social relationships. It also improves patient compliance with recommended treatments.³

❖ Art from the Heart (AFTH) is a collaboration between Burlington City Arts (BCA), UVM Medical Center (UVMC) and volunteers, which provides art supplies, visual art, and patient "About Me" pages to patients, families and employees.

❖ The objective of this study is to assess the efficacy of AFTH through exploring nursing staff perceptions, understanding and attitudes towards the program.

METHODS

❖ 28 interviews of nursing staff perspectives were conducted on Baird 4, an adult inpatient ward, at UVM Medical Center.

❖ A 19 question survey using Likert scales and short answer formats was administered via structured interviews. Questions assessed perceptions of the utility of art on patient anxiety and pain, effects on communication, as well as job satisfaction and burnout.

❖ The surveys were analyzed to extract major and minor themes.

RESULTS

❖ Art From the Heart improves patient well-being and nurse satisfaction

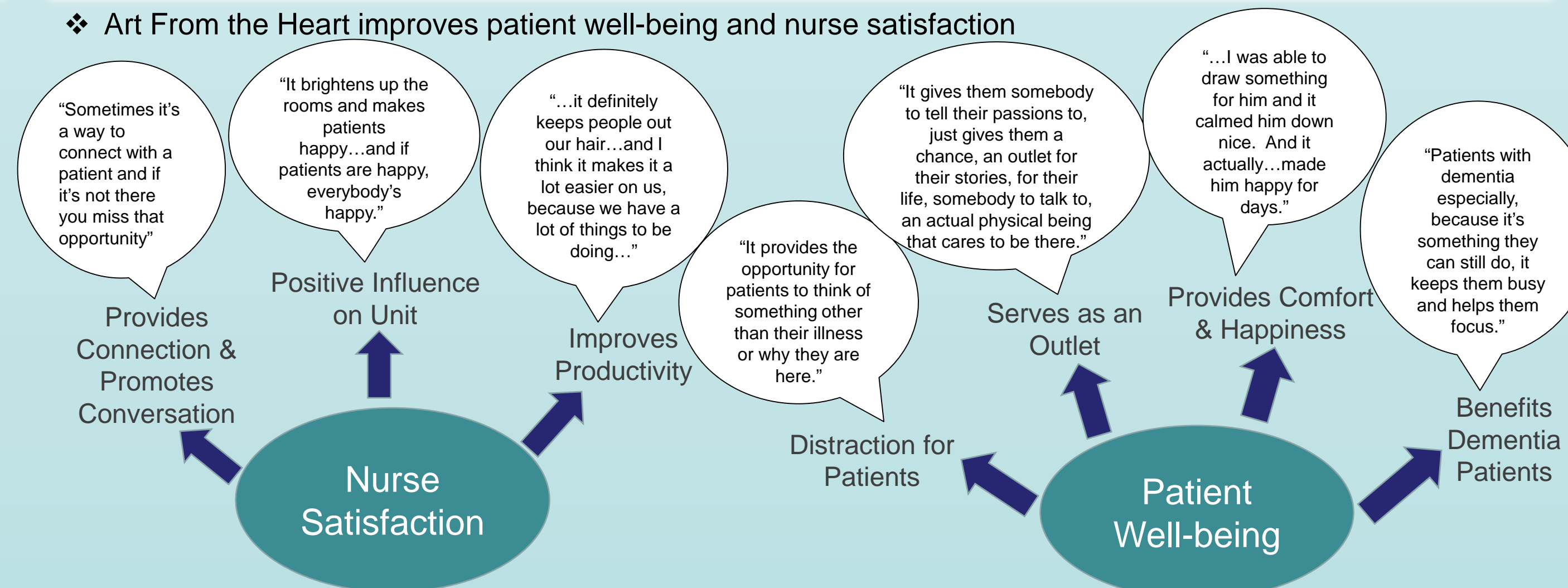


Figure 1: AFTH positively impacts nursing environment and relationships with patients

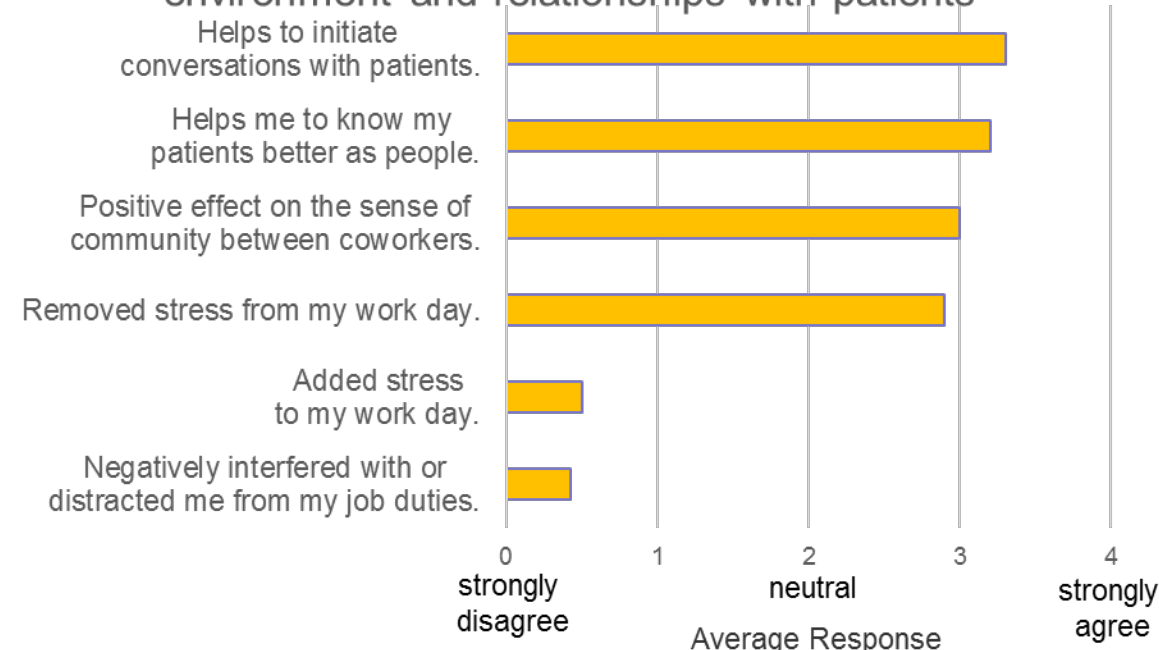
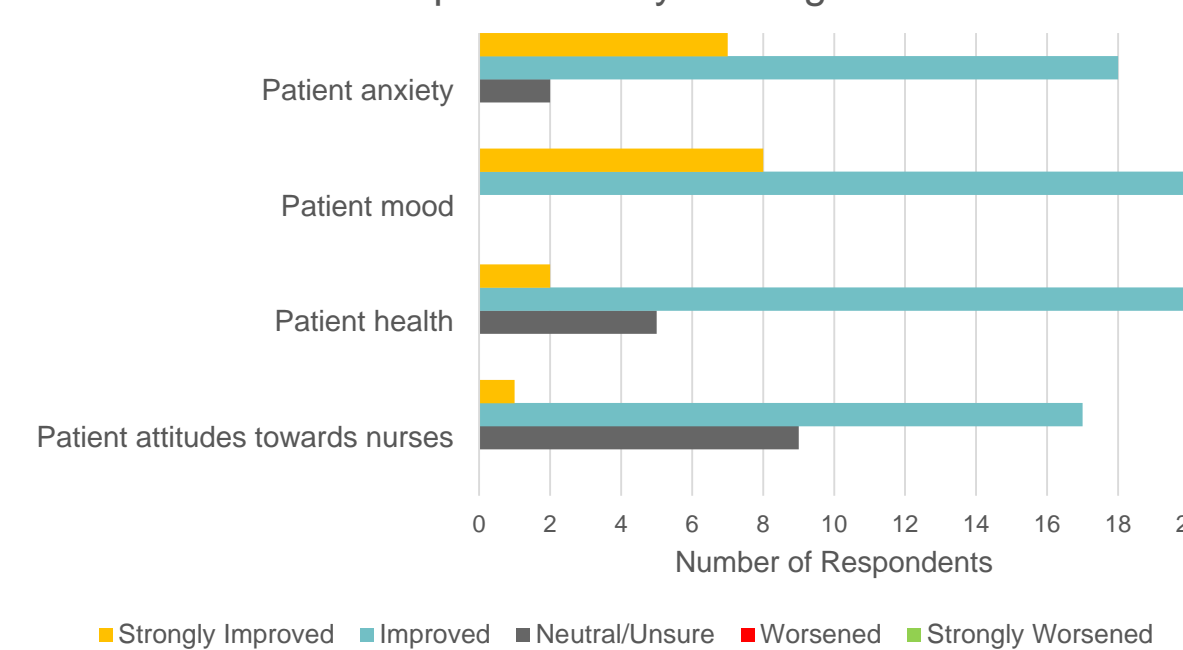


Figure 2: Impact of AFTH on patient well-being as perceived by nursing staff



Figures 1 and 2: Baird 4 nursing staff overwhelmingly reported that AFTH helps with initiating patient conversation, seeing patients as individuals, removing stress from providers and improving the sense of community among co-workers. None of the surveyed staff reported that AFTH was a distraction from work duties or added stress to their job.

DISCUSSION

Burnout is a problem that significantly impacts the nursing community.¹ AFTH evoked several major positive themes related to nurse satisfaction. It was reported by nursing staff to enhance relationships with patients, create community among coworkers and decrease stress. This is consistent with prior research performed with art programming.³ AFTH's positive effects on nurses likely reduces burnout and improves retention.

The second major theme was AFTH's effect on patient wellbeing. Patient attitudes towards nurses were strongly improved by AFTH in 17 out of 27 cases, which is congruent with prior research showing art programming's positive impact on patient stress and nurse-patient communication.³

CONCLUSION

AFTH provides positive benefits on Baird 4 by:

- ❖ Reducing nursing staff stress and perceived patient anxiety
- ❖ Improving communication, perceived patient mood and health.
- ❖ Creating a sense of community, possibly reducing rates of burnout.

Limitations: Our study included a small sample size with a high turnover rate on the unit, as well as a lack of knowledge or accessibility to the program.

SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ AFTH should be included in new Baird 4 staff orientation
- ❖ Art kits should be provided at the nursing station
- ❖ A contact sheet at the nurse's station of who to contact and where to find additional supplies
- ❖ This program should also be expanded to other adult in-patient floors.

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