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Delirium Education for Nurses on a Medical-Surgical Unit

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Delirium Education for Nurses on a Medical-Surgical Unit

Failure to recognize delirium compromises patient safety and may lead to harmful outcomes. By June 2015, nurses on medical-surgical units will screen 100-percent of patients for delirium according to an established protocol. The project mesosystem is a 411-bed, level I trauma center and teaching hospital; the microsystem is a 28-bed medical-surgical telemetry unit.

An audit of microsystem data collected over four months in 2014 revealed that delirium was consistently underidentified (10% in September, 26% in October, 34% in November, and 22% in December), suggesting that medical-surgical nurses were not equipped to effectively perform delirium screening.

Nursing education consisting of bedside teaching, web-based learning, and use of training manuals created from evidence-based literature was scheduled from March through May. 100% of medical-surgical nurses completed the mandatory web-based delirium education video in March. Delirium “champions” were recruited to lead bedside training in May, and individual pocket cards featuring the CAM screening and nursing interventions were created and distributed to nurses.

Follow-up surveys and random chart audits will promote nursing consistency in screening for delirium, documenting results in the EMR, implementing interventions, and collaborating with physicians. Survey and audit results will be evaluated and compared to the previous audit and national reported data in order to identify and correct gaps in the education process.