



Optimization of Nursing Care for Patients Suffering from Mental Disorders in the Elderly and Senile Age

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Abstract: *Optimization of nursing care for patients with mental disorders in the elderly and senile age requires special attention and approaches. It is important to take into account the individual needs of each patient, as well as their physical and emotional state. Qualified nurses should develop and implement specialized care programs aimed at improving the mental health and general well-being of patients. The use of complex methods such as therapeutic communication, active listening and group activities can significantly improve the quality of care provided. The synergy between the medical and social aspects of care will create a more comfortable environment for older people suffering from various mental illnesses, contributing to their social integration and improving their quality of life. Professional interaction with relatives is also essential for the effective treatment and support of such patients.*

In addition, a key aspect of optimizing care is the training of nurses in specific methods of working with patients with mental disorders. This may include trainings on the value of emotional intelligence, creating a trusting atmosphere, and conflict management. Such skills are necessary for an adequate assessment of the patient's condition and the provision of timely care.

It is also important to introduce a multi-level approach to psychosocial support that takes into account various aspects of the lives of older people. For example, hobby activities, physical activity and psychotherapy can significantly improve the general condition of patients, contributing to psychological recovery and strengthening social ties.

The system of regular monitoring of patients' condition will allow nurses to effectively respond to changes in psychological health, as well as adapt existing care programs. The joint efforts of nurses, doctors and social workers will contribute to the creation of an optimal range of services and ensure an integrated approach to treatment.

Keywords: *mental disorders, gerontopsychiatry, nursing model, questionnaire.*

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With the accelerated aging of the population, the search for measures, including medical and social ones, aimed at ensuring long-term health preservation and increasing the duration of the active period of life of elderly and senile people becomes particularly relevant. Nursing staff should play an essential role in the implementation of these measures, since older people most often do not need constant medical supervision, but care, supportive treatment and assistance that nurses are fully capable of providing.

Currently, higher demands are placed on the work of a nurse than before. She should be not just a technical performer, but an independent specialist. This is especially important when working with gerontopsychiatric patients in inpatient care facilities, where care is more difficult and requires more attention and time than regular medical care.

The aim of the study was to evaluate existing approaches to the organization of nursing care for elderly and senile patients suffering from mental disorders in order to develop proposals for its optimization.

Material and methods. For the first time in the context of healthcare reform, a comprehensive study of the problems of gerontopsychiatric patients and the peculiarities of the organization of nursing care was conducted on the basis of the Severodvinsk Neuropsychiatric dispensary hospital. To implement the objectives of the study, a program was developed that provided for patient monitoring and questioning of nurses. The specifics of nursing care stem from the problems and needs of patients. To assess the main problems of patients, we used the grading scale of the need for care, the Bartel scale (a scale for determining activity in everyday life), the FIM scale of functional independence.

Results and discussion. The patients were monitored in the male and female departments of the hospital. 20 people were included in the study. The majority of them (56.7%) were people aged 60-89 years. Almost half of the patients (46.7%) suffered from dementia, about 1/3 – organic brain diseases, 13.3% – schizophrenia.

Unlike patients with narcological diseases, our patients needed a long stay in the hospital (the period of time for the contingent we observed ranged from 1 to 3 months), which indicates the need for an individual approach. It is known that a significant decrease in the mental and physical abilities of older people (mental disorders, limited mobility, partial hearing and vision loss) reduce the ability to self-care. We determined the limited ability to self-service based on:

- the need for auxiliary means, the possibility of correcting the ability to self-serve with the help of auxiliary means;
- the need for outside help in meeting physiological and household needs;
- the frequency with which such assistance is needed: once a day, several times a day, constantly.

The results of the observation showed that only 25% of patients could fully serve themselves, 45% had a reduced ability to self-serve, and 30% were unable to serve themselves and needed constant care. A decrease in the ability to self-serve is a limited ability to independently satisfy their basic physiological and household needs, and to observe personal hygiene skills. Determining the degree of loss of the ability to self-care made it possible to determine the real needs of patients in care and the individual type of nursing care. The Bartel scale observation revealed the priority physiological and motor problems of the patients. More than half (60.3%) of patients needed help with meals, 55% were completely or partially dependent on medical personnel for dressing, 57% of patients in the men's department and 66.7% in the women's department needed help with personal toilet and taking a bath. Some patients did not understand the need for regular hygiene procedures, i.e. they needed to form a need for self-help in the implementation of personal hygiene. Some patients needed training in dental care, dentures, and perineal hygiene.

Urinary incontinence is a complex problem in old age, having psychosocial, economic and medical aspects. Patients with functional urinary incontinence rarely suffer from abnormalities of the lower urinary tract. On the contrary, they are more likely to have dementia or paralysis and a belief in the inability to urinate normally.

During the study of this problem, it was found that patients who can stand with the help of medical staff often experience improvement in functional urinary incontinence and constant progress. Following the toilet schedule and regular emptying of the bladder not only improves the function of urine excretion, but also increases the main daily activity.

The use of diapers and diapers for urinary incontinence is one of the reasons for the limitation of opportunities and a decrease in the quality of life of elderly and senile patients. Observing the toilet and emptying the bladder is an effective method of treating urinary incontinence. To restore the lost ability to self-care, reduce the symptoms of urinary incontinence, prevent bedsores, and reduce discomfort due to a reduced ability to self-care, it is important to take into account the effectiveness of measures that are taken for these purposes. Further investigation of the patients' problems showed that the need for assistance in movement of male and female patients did not differ significantly. More than 15% of the subjects were unable to get out of bed, more than 55% could not move independently without assistance or moved in a wheelchair. Only 30% of patients did not need help climbing stairs, 40.5% needed supervision and support, and were unable to climb even with the support of 25%.

Therefore, the main tasks of a nurse are to teach patients self-care with minimal outside help, the use of means of transportation, creating conditions for patients to exercise self-care, and educating patients' relatives. A special medical approach in the care of gerontopsychiatric patients is also associated with memory impairment, decreased intelligence, and staff rejection. The assessment of intellectual functions on the FIM scale showed that the priority problem of the observed patients is a significant decrease in memory in 100% of cases. At the same time, 70% of patients revealed complete and partial dependence on others when perceiving external information, 40% – dependence when expressing their own desires and thoughts. As for interaction with family members, medical staff and others around them, 60% of patients have complete and partial dependence on them.

Thus, observation of elderly and senile patients made it possible to identify their physiological, motor and intellectual problems, the main of which are impaired ability to self-care and independent movement, as well as a significant decrease in memory, complete and limited dependence on others when perceiving external information. Based on the FIM scale, we have developed the form "Assessment of motor and intellectual functions with various degrees of dependence of patients", which has been successfully implemented and used in the work of the nursing staff of the hospital of the neuropsychiatric dispensary. To determine approaches to the organization of care for gerontopsychiatric patients in a particular healthcare institution, we conducted a survey of nurses working with these patients. The questionnaire "Assessment of the effectiveness of nursing care for elderly and senile patients suffering from mental disorders" was specially developed. The study involved 20 nurses, who were distributed by age as follows: 10% are 31-40 years old, 25% are under 30 years old, 50% are 41-50 years old, 15% are 51-60 years old. About 80% of the nurses had over 10 years of experience in psychiatry. The surveyed group was dominated by nurses with the I qualification category (53.3%), 10% of the respondents had the highest category. The results of the study showed that, according to 70% of the nursing staff, the care of gerontopsychiatric patients requires great attention and improvement. 60% of the nursing staff of the women's department and 30% of the male staff called the nursing care of high quality.

Among the reasons hindering the improvement of the quality of care for patients in this group, the main ones were insufficient material and technical support (100% of respondents), the age of patients and the severity of the disease (80%), heavy workload of staff (49%), distrust of medical staff on the part of patients (16.5%). According to the nursing staff, a special medical approach in the care of gerontopsychiatric patients is associated with a violation of their intellectual functions and the lack of perception of staff. At the same time, more than 40% of respondents considered it

necessary to review the existing norms of the burden on the nurse when caring for this group of patients. According to 80% of respondents, 4 patients per 1 nurse is the maximum workload. The nurses confirmed that the nursing process contributes to improving the quality of nursing care for patients in this group. The survey showed that working according to the standard significantly helps in the implementation of nursing care. This is the opinion of 70% of male nurses and 80% of female nurses. According to 98% of the survey participants, a ward nurse, a coordinating nurse, and junior medical staff trained in the care of elderly patients should participate in the complex of measures for the care of gerontopsychiatric patients. It should be noted that 97% of respondents indicated the need for the active participation of the coordinating sister in the planning of nursing care. According to the majority of respondents (70%), elderly and senile patients suffering from mental disorders should be placed in 3-bed wards. Staying in an individual ward is considered optimal for this contingent by 30% of respondents. A number of very specific requirements are imposed on medical personnel working in modern psychiatric clinics, which differ from those in other medical institutions. When ranking the professional and personal qualities of the nursing staff needed to work with the contingent in question, the nurses in 1st place indicated professional qualifications (98%), in 2nd place - psychological characteristics (85%), in 3rd place – physical strength (25%).

In addition, special training in geriatrics and gerontology is required. A nurse should know the clinical manifestations of diseases most common in the elderly, the principles of their treatment, the specifics of caring for elderly and senile patients, have basic skills of physical and psychological rehabilitation aimed at maintaining health and self-care, understand the psychology of an aging person and be able to establish friendly relations with him and his environment. The study showed that the nurses surveyed did not receive special training in geriatrics and gerontology. To get information about the specifics of caring for the elderly and elderly, about half (46.6%) of nurses read medical literature, 40% were guided by life experience, 11% used television information, 5% attended conferences. 95% of nurses consider it necessary to create a specialized department for the care of elderly and senile patients, which would include a geriatrician, a psychotherapist, and a neurologist.

Thus, the main problems of gerontopsychiatric patients are impaired ability to self-care and independent movement, as well as significant memory loss, complete and partial dependence on others when perceiving external information. The nursing staff sees ways to optimize nursing care for gerontopsychiatric patients in the standardization of nursing activities, advanced training in geriatrics and gerontology, reviewing the workload of nurses, improving the material and technical equipment of departments, as well as in the rational organization of their work. According to the results of this study, "quality circles" have been organized in the departments of the hospital of the neuropsychiatric dispensary, which, in our opinion, will help solve the problems of improving the quality of nursing care, identify problems in a timely manner, and effectively distribute the labor functions of nurses. Today it is quite obvious that the system of preventive, curative and health-improving measures to strengthen the health of the elderly should ensure that they extend the period of working capacity, motor activity, and self-care ability. The preservation of the health of the older population is of great social and economic importance, since health and social security costs depend on its level.

Thus, the optimization of nursing care for patients with mental disorders requires flexibility, high qualifications and a willingness to continuous training in order to most effectively meet the unique needs of older people.

To further improve the nursing service in psychiatry, it is necessary to improve the system of training psychiatric nurses, develop new organizational forms of work and technologies of nursing, scientific research in the field of nursing in psychiatry, and develop criteria for evaluating the quality of nursing.

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