

Title: Use of Audit to Drive Quality Improvement in Oral Care on a Neurological Rehabilitation Unit

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Introduction

Oral hygiene is an essential aspect of patient care and helps prevent aspiration pneumonia and other systemic infections which subsequently lead to longer hospital stays and increased mortality rates.

Materials and Methods

A preliminary audit of the compliance in providing oral care on 4 hourly basis revealed 54% compliance on a neurological rehabilitation unit. Further audits of staff knowledge and documentation, confirmed the need to train nursing staff and develop documentation to improve compliance with oral care. As recommended in the literature, this hospital uses a 24 hour oral cleansing and suctioning system (SAGE Products Inc., Q4) which includes a protocol and products to provide four hourly oral care to patients who are at high risk of aspiration.

To drive quality improvement, action plans were created to improve compliance including regular staff training, orientation to updated mouth care documentation, inclusion of mouth care in nurse handoff and obtaining feedback from unit managers. Following these interventions, the oral care audit tool was used to measure 1. Frequency of oral care, 2. Documentation, 3. Completion of weekly oral care assessment tool to determine aspiration risk, 4. Patients' oral hygiene status.

Results

Significant improvement in compliance of oral care was noted following seven months of on the spot training, implementation of action plans and ongoing audits. On average, nurses achieved > 90% compliance in providing patients with oral care on a Q4 basis and improvement in oral hygiene status was noted with scores moving from minimal mouth care to good / moderate mouth care.

Biography

Aisha O'Gilvie, MA CCC-SLP, is an experienced Speech and Language Pathologist who specializes in neurorehabilitation in the adolescent and adult population. She received her Bachelors's Degree in Communication and Science Disorders from The College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York and completed her Masters in Arts in Communication and Science Disorders at the University of Connecticut.

Dianne Banagale is a Registered Nurse specializing in Critical Care, Neurosciences and Neurorehabilitation. She completed her Overseas Nurse Program in City University of London, Neurosciences course at King's College, London and Critical Care course at the Philippine Heart Center.

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