

Fall Prevention Program for Dementia Clients – Caregivers’ Perspective

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Introduction

Dementia is a major risk factor for fall. Falls and associated injuries can have considerable influences on the autonomy and quality of life of older. However, falls are erroneously believed to be an inevitable consequence of aging. Hence, fall prevention program was implemented to raise awareness of caregivers of dementia clients and offering practical strategies for educating them about fall prevention since April 2007.

Purposes of the Project

1. To assess caregivers' awareness in fall prevention
2. To raise the caregivers' awareness and provide relevant training around falls prevention
3. To decrease the number of falls in demented clients by raising their caregivers' awareness and knowledge of the contributory factors

Setting

Dementia Day Care Centre in Wong Chuk Hang Hospital

Material

Two sessions of educational workshop were conducted for increasing the awareness and knowledge of caregivers in fall prevention in April 2007. Self-designed questionnaires were used for assessing the caregivers' awareness and consequences of fall for elders. Also, the Fall Prevention Protocol for Community Elders was employed to assess caregivers' compliance to nurses' advices and recommendation on fall prevention.

Method

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the baseline characteristics of clients, caregivers' awareness in fall prevention and frequency of fall incidents.

Results

Ten caregivers participated in the educational workshops. Questionnaires were collected before and 3 months after the workshops. Home visit for ten dementia clients were done for an in-depth look at risk factors in home environments; and recommendations were documented in Fall Prevention Protocol.

After the interventions, there was a 54% increase in the caregivers' awareness of fall incidents. All caregivers concurred that there are serious consequences after fall in elders, such as fracture, hospitalization, impaired

mobility and etc. And, there was an 83% decrease in fall episodes. In addition, the compliance rate of caregivers to assess the risks of fall and monthly report the progress to nurses was 100%.

Conclusions

Fall is a common and serious health problem among demented elders. All caregivers should be alert to and aware of the risks and know how to prevent them. It is imperative that nurses become involved in coordinating fall education programs, monitoring and alleviating risks of fall in home environment.