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Nurses experiences delivering care to people with intellectual disability in acute care settings: Barriers, enablers, and opportunities for development

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Introduction

Registered nurses caring for people with intellectual disability in acute care setting feel

- Underprepared by their education and training
- Challenged by the difficulties of communication
- Ambivalent about the roles of caregivers

Significance

- Much has been done to improve the care of people with ID in the last decade
- Patient and caregiver perspectives are imperative BUT
- How can nurses be supported to provide care for people with ID in acute care settings?
- What are the barriers to and facilitators of the delivery of high quality care?



Consider this ...

While I'm talking, ask yourself

What further contribution can the disability community make to addressing the specific challenges that nurses describe when caring for people with ID?



Aims

The aim of this presentation is to

- Describe findings from our recent review of the literature
- Provide a forum for discussion of opportunities to support nurses and address the challenges that they experience
- Describe opportunities for further research

Method

We conducted a narrative review of the literature which

- Provides a systematic way of approaching the literature
- Summarises, explains, and interprets evidence around a particular topic
- Enables the conduct of a thematic analysis

We included

- Reports of research studies published in English language between 2006 and 2015
- Reports of findings from studies of registered nurses

We excluded

- Research studies of health care professionals in which the unique voice of nurses was not reported
- Studies of nurses working in settings other than acute care

Findings

- A total of 388 studies of which 14 were reviewed for this paper.
- Studies originated in the UK (n=8), Australia (n=3), Canada (n=2), the Netherlands (n=1)
- Analysis identified three themes
- Nurses feel underprepared when caring for people with ID
- Nurses experience challenges communicating with people with ID
- Nurses have ambiguous expectations of role of paid and unpaid caregivers

Nurses feel underprepared

- Lack of context specific education and training
- Unfamiliarity with care of people with ID

Compared to caring for people with a physical disability nurses feel more

- Hopeless
- Nervous
- Frustrated
- Awkward

When caring for people with ID. They also feel less

- Comfortable
- Confident
- Relaxed
- Optimistic



Nurses feel challenged by communicating with people with ID

- Difficulties interpreting non-verbal modes of communication
- Unfamiliarity with how to refer to people with ID

We identified three primary challenges communicating with people with ID

- Nurses perceive communication to be time consuming and difficult
- Nurses sometimes interact with a “stereotype” instead of with the individual in front of them
- Nurses sometimes lack access to resources that assist their communication – such as documentation



Nurses' ambiguous expectations of the role of caregivers

- Assumptions about willingness and ability to provide care in hospital
- Absence of caregiver might invoke judgment BUT presence of caregiver might be experienced as intrusive
- Nurses value of caregivers unequal – paid lower status than unpaid
- No conclusions except to say that partnerships need to develop



Pause for discussion

What contribution further contribution can the disability community make to addressing the specific challenges that nurses describe when caring for PWID?

Other discussion points

- Profile of nursing people with ID is potentially higher in the UK because of recognised specialty area of practice
- Generalist nursing education in Australia might render people marginalised in mainstream society invisible
- Exposure to and familiarity with people with ID can promote positive attitudes towards them
- Targeted strategies for supporting nurses to develop effective communication skills with people with ID
- Targeted strategies for nurses to develop effective partnerships with paid and unpaid caregivers

Opportunities for further research

- Interview based study of RNs working in SWSLHD
- Interviews focus on three themes identified in literature
- Slow recruitment so far – no opportunity to develop preliminary findings

Conclusion

Narrative review of the literature has identified that nurses

- Feel underprepared
- Experience challenges communicating
- Feel ambivalent about roles of paid and unpaid caregivers

When caring for people with ID in acute care settings

Opportunities exist to study the experiences of nurses working in Australian acute care settings and to provide nurses with more effective preparation for delivering care to people with ID in acute care settings

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