"Knowledge of Dementia among Health and Social Care Undergraduates in Hong Kong"
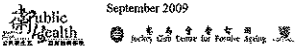
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September 2009

Objectives

- To evaluate the level of dementia knowledge among undergraduates in the health and social care professions

- To examine their competence in working with the dementia sufferers

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Method

- The survey was conducted between April and June 2009.
- 221 completed questionnaires were returned (response rate = 69%)
- Participants were final year undergraduates from 4 health and social care disciplines: medicine, occupational therapy, nursing, and social work
- The mean age of the participants was 23, with an age range between 20 and 35

Method

- Questionnaire:

  - Alzheimer's Disease Knowledge Test

  - Self-Efficacy Scales

  - Class Hours

Method

- Questionnaire: Alzheimer's Disease Knowledge test (ADK)

  - To evaluate level of dementia knowledge (Dieckmann, Zarit, Zarit & Gatz, 1988)

  - 20 questions
    - Prevalence, etiology, diagnosis, symptoms, cures, management of behavioral problems, community resources

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Method

- Questionnaire: Self-Efficacy Scales

  - Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of performing in a certain manner to attain certain goals (Bandura, 1994)

  - General Self-Efficacy (GSE)
    - 10 items
  - Dementia-Caregiving Self-Efficacy (DSE)
    - 10 items

Findings

- Knowledge of Dementia
  - Overall ADK score = 7.52 out of 20, 38%

Table 1: ADK Test Mean Scores

	Social Work (N=124)	Nursing (N=15)	Occupational therapy (N=36)	Medicine (N=46)
Mean ADK score (Max.=20)	5.04	9.67	9.78	11.74

Findings

- Knowledge of Dementia: Prevalence rate

  - Nearly half (46%) of the students knew that it is around 10% in persons over 70

  - 67% were aware that the prevalence of AD in the general population increases in proportion to the population over 65 in Hong Kong

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Findings

- Knowledge of Dementia: Etiology

  - 55% knew that persons with a close relative who has AD have a higher risk of being afflicted

Findings

- Knowledge of Dementia: Treatment

  - More than half (65%) of the students did not know that dementia drugs cannot prevent further decline

  - The majority had overestimated the therapeutic effect of pharmacological treatment for dementia.

Findings

- Knowledge of Dementia: Symptoms

  - 63% of the medical students recognized that symptoms of depression, delirium and stroke sometimes resemble AD

  - Over 70% of the students from the other 3 disciplines did not know that symptoms of these illnesses could be similar

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Findings

- Knowledge of Dementia: Diagnosis

  - 85% of the medical students knew that autopsy is required to confirm AD

  - Nursing (87%), social work (77%) and occupational therapy students (69%) improperly selected mental status testing or CT scan as the required procedure

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Findings

- Knowledge of Dementia: Management of behavioral problems
  - 51% of the occupational therapy and 41% of the medical students recognized that wandering problem is best managed by using lockable doors
  - Most of the nursing (53%) and social work (34%) students wrongly thought that expressing concerns to patients can solve the problem

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Findings

- Knowledge of Dementia: Management of behavioral problems
  - Nursing (100%), medical (90%) and occupational therapy (89%) students knew that when patients have difficulty performing self-care activities, it is important to assist with the activity so that they can remain as independent as possible
  - Only one-third of social work students (33%) knew the answer

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Findings

- Knowledge of Dementia: Accessing community resources

  - Only 27% of the social work students knew that patients diagnosed with AD are eligible to apply for Disability Allowance, while 24% were uncertain

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Findings

- Self-Efficacy

  - The General Self-Efficacy score (GSE) and the Dementia-caregiving Self-Efficacy score (DSE) in nursing, occupational therapy and medicine groups were fairly close

  - the social work students' DSE (23.7) was significantly lower than their GSE (27.1).

Findings

- Self-Efficacy

Table 2: Mean Self-Efficacy Scores

	Social Work (N=124)	Nursing (N=15)	Occupational therapy (N=36)	Medicine (N=46)	Total (N=221)
DSE (max=40)	23.72	26.6	29.11	26.2	25.31
GSE (max=40)	27.1	26.6	28.81	26.91	27.31

Findings

- Class Hours
  - 44% of the occupational therapy and medical students reported that the class hours covering dementia topic in their programmes were between 6-10 hours.
  - Over 50% (53%) of the nursing students said the class hours were between 1-5 hours.
  - The majority (75%) of the social work students had the class hours from 0-5 hours

Findings

- Class Hours

Table 3: Hours Covered Dementia-Related Topics in Undergraduate Programs

Hour	Social Work (N = 124) %	Nursing (N = 15) %	Occupational therapy (N = 36) %	Medicine (N = 46) %	Total (N = 221) %
0	31	0	0	0	17
1-5	44	53	11	9	32
6-10	8	27	44	44	23
11-15	3	0	19	9	7
16+	5	0	14	16	8
Don't know	10	20	11	22	14

Findings

- Class Hours

  - It is shown that correlations among class hours on dementia topics, students' knowledge of dementia, and their competence in dementia care-giving are were all significant.

  - This suggests that more education can improve students' their knowledge and competence.

Conclusions

- The overall ADK score of undergraduates in health and social care professions was low

- Poor knowledge in treatment, symptoms and diagnosis, behavioural management, and community resources

Conclusions

- Medical students were better at symptoms and diagnosis

- Nursing and occupational therapy students were better at behavioural management

Conclusions

- Social work students attained the lowest DSE and had the least hours of dementia education

- Correlations among class hours on dementia topics, students' knowledge of dementia, and their competence in dementia caregiving were all significant

Recommendations

- Devote more hours to teaching dementia-related content

- Provide greater exposure to relevant elderly services via placement and internship. This would help to develop the students' competence in delivering dementia care

Recommendations

- Provide on-the-job training for fresh graduates and new staff

- This would ensure service standard, enabling dementia sufferers to receive treatment plans effectively and have early access to services

Thank You