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Learning about Constipation in ESRD Patients – A Creative Educational Training for Bedside Nurses

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Background: End-stage renal disease (ESRD) patients are at risk of constipation as a result of diet restriction, medications uses and physical inactivity. While constipation in ESRD patients can lead to peritoneal dialysis treatment failure, decreased quality of life and increased length of hospital stays of all dialysis patients, this problem is often overlooked and poorly managed. Bedside nurses’ insufficient knowledge on kidney friendly high fiber foods and their lack of awareness of constipation in ESRD patients were issues identified by the dialysis nurses during their rounding of the units.

Purpose: The aim of this project was to evaluate whether a 30-minutes educational intervention, presented to 30 bedside nurses of two medicine units in a 1,200 bed academic medical center, will increases their knowledge on constipation among ESRD patients.

Method: The face-to-face educational training, facilitated by the nurse educator and dialysis nurses, included uses of a self-assessment tool, power point slides presentation, storytelling and Bingo game. In addition, visual aids “Constipation Meds Traffic Light” poster and various food items with nutrition labels, were also used during the training to enhance the participants’ attention and learning. For the training evaluation, the participants were invited to complete the “minute paper”, in which they were asked to provide two significant topics they had learned from the training session.

Results: Data from the minute paper revealed that the topics most frequently cited by the participants were kidney friendly high fiber foods, constipation medications for dialysis patients, causes and consequences of constipation among dialysis patients, and the Bristol Stool Chart.

Conclusion: Findings from this project suggest that educational intervention consisting of various creative teaching methods increased bedside nurses’ knowledge on constipation in ESRD patients. Future studies are needed to determine if this educational intervention may positively impact patient outcomes.

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