Identifying Delirium: The Right Tool for the Job.

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Published In/Presented At  
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Patient Care Services
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

Research Questions:
In hospitalized adults on a medical-surgical unit, how does the CAM tool compare to the NU-DESC for identifying acute changes in cognition?

Problem Focused Triggers:
- Studies indicate that each year more than 2.5 million hospitalized older adults experience delirium
- Patients who develop delirium during hospitalization have a mortality rate of 22-76% and a high rate of death during the months following discharge
- In elderly and postoperative patients, delirium may result in prolonged hospitalization, increased complications, and long-term disability
- It is estimated that complications associated with delirium cost Medicare 6.9 billion dollars annually

Form a Team:
- Administrator, Evidence-Based Practice & Clinical Excellence
- Coordinator, NICHE Program
- Patient Care Specialist, Medical-Surgical Intensive Care Unit
- Patient Care Specialist, Progressive Care Unit
- Patient Care Specialist, Medical-Surgical Unit
- Quality Specialist, EBP & Clinical Excellence

Institute the Change in Practice:
- Initiate education program for all nursing staff with validation and application of the tool
- Develop patient and family education
- Incorporate tool into electronic nursing documentation
- Develop nursing care plan
- Implement hospital-wide use of the CAM scoring tool
- Future: Develop a nurse-managed clinical practice guideline for delirium detection and intervention

Assemble Relevant Research and Related Literature:

Pilot Change in Practice:
- Select outcomes to be achieved: Determine delirium tool with the highest inter-rater reliability.
- Collect baseline data: Patient Care Specialist (PCS) applied five identified delirium tools on three different clinical units and compared scores, resulting in the elimination of all tools except the CAM and Nu-Desc.
- Develop evidence based practice guideline:
  - Develop standardized education plan for CAM and Nu-Desc tools on pilot units. Educate 6 RN's on use of both scales on 3 pilot units.
  - PCS and RN concurrently assess patients for delirium using CAM and Nu-Desc tools.
  - Record and analyze tool results assessing for inter-rater reliability.
  - Develop and review staff evaluation tool.
- Implement on pilot unit: Nu-Desc 238 trials, CAM 82 trials conducted on 3 units.
- Evaluate process and outcome: CAM tool had the highest inter-rater reliability, Nu-Desc had an overly high sensitivity; evaluation found staff trusted the CAM tool.
- Modify the practice guideline: CAM tool to be utilized by all RNs to assist in identifying delirium indicators.