

CHAMPS: Cognitive Health Application Modules in a Practicum Setting

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Motivation: The quality of healthcare in the United States has been an inflammatory issue causing public debate since the 1999 report from the Institute of Medicine “To Err is Human”. This report, in conjunction with other research, has provided catalysis for change.

Evidence: The Institute of Medicine’s 1999 report announced that approximately 98,000 U.S. patients die each year from medical errors. More recent reports indicate that these original numbers may have been underestimated.

Problem Statement: Does the complex nature of today’s nursing practice contribute to the rapid increase in medical errors. Can medical surgical telemetry nurses identify the signs and symptoms of a patient’s deteriorating condition and make the necessary critical decisions to rescue the patient?

Strategy: Telemetry nurses were placed in a simulated situation, where they made decisions about patient care. The Cognitive Health Applications Modules in a Practicum Setting “CHAMPS” is designed to improve patient safety by using a Human Patient Simulation (HPS). The CHAMPS program provided an opportunity to evaluate a nurse’s current patient rescue skills, and provide a teaching method that will increase cognitive, technical and interpersonal skills. Nurses will learn without causing death or harm to a real patient.

Evaluation: We tested 42 telemetry nurses from two units (rural, urban) on four modules: ACS; CHF; COPD; Post Op. Each nurse was evaluated individually on their ability to assess and implement interventions to rescue the patient.

Results: Pretest showed less than 50% of the time, these nurses were unable to recognize the signs and symptoms of deterioration in the simulated patient. (The ability to recognize a decrease in trends for the modules was: ACS – 45%; CHF – 52%; COPD – 43%; Post Op – 40 %.). Post didactic and applied practicum classes are in progress. Post testing retention study is scheduled.

Recommendations: Change the focus of nursing education to provide practical experience that will enhance the bedside nurse’s ability to recognize and respond to changes in their patient’s condition using the HPS and CHAMPS. This will provide nurses the opportunity to practice patient rescue skills and will result in improved patient outcomes and safety.

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