

**Coaching and Mentoring Support Staff Nurse-Driven Geriatric EB Project**  
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**Problem:** Nursing professionals are poorly prepared to provide age-specific care to the population of geriatric patients<sup>1</sup>. Most nurses have not had formal education in geriatrics or in evidence-based practice/research.

**Evidence:** Aging of the American population is one of the largest public health issues facing the U. S. in the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>2</sup>. The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Nursing received a HRSA grant to provide education to practicing hospital nurses on geriatric best practices and design of evidence-based projects.

**Strategy:** Hospital-based education specialists coached and mentored three teams of staff nurses over six months to support the staff nurses' development and successful implementation of evidence-based projects focusing on geriatric outcomes. Coaching can unleash human potential to produce excellence in personal performance<sup>3</sup>. School of nursing faculty provided four days of geriatric and evidence-based project education along with a web-site devoted to geriatric references and best practices, presentation tips and templates.

**Practice Change:** Staff nurses designed and implemented projects focusing on:  
1) recognition and early implementation of protocol for elderly sepsis patients,  
2) conducting hourly rounds to reduce falls, and 3) developing a game to educate unit staff about fall prevention.

**Evaluation:** 1) Cost/case, length of stay, patient outcomes. 2) Number of patient falls.  
3) Post-test scores of staff nurses.

**Results:** 1) Significant cost savings and improved outcomes for geriatric sepsis patients on pilot units. 2) Decreased number of patient falls on pilot units. 3) Improved post-intervention test scores of staff nurses. 4) Creation of a Geriatric Best Practice Team.

**Recommendations:** Education provided a strong foundation for the development of staff nurse-driven evidence-based projects, but coaching and mentoring empowered staff nurses to experience successful outcomes. Coaching and mentoring must be partnered with education to produce successful staff nurse-driven evidence-based projects.

<sup>2</sup> Gerberding in Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Merck Company Foundation, (2007).

<sup>1</sup> Klein and Kelly, (1997).

<sup>3</sup> Kowalski and Casper, (2007).