

The Effect of Caregiver Feeding Education on Dementia Patient Weight

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Abstract

Dementia is associated with deterioration in memory and cognition which can be severe enough to diminish a person's capacity to perform everyday activities including eating. Maintaining sufficient nutritional intake for dementia patients requires skilled knowledgeable caregivers. The focus of this project was to develop an evidence-based feeding protocol to assist caregivers in providing optimal nutrient intake of dementia patients, to evaluate changes in staff knowledge, and to determine the impact on dementia patients' meal intake percentage and weights through chart review. Dementia typically causes a decline in both cognitive and physical abilities leading to functionality and self-care limitations. Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory provides a framework for defining the role of the nurse in identifying self-care deficits and satisfying the patients' self-care needs through the interactions of nurses, caregivers, and clients. Post intervention implementation, the results indicated there was no statistically significant relationship between the awareness of the feeding protocol and patients' weight gain or maintenance. A significant relationship between awareness of the feeding protocol and patients' percentage of meal consumption was indicated by the increase in mean percentage of patient meal consumption of 9.10% following the caregivers' participation in the education program.