

Implementing an Alcohol Use Screening Protocol in Palliative Care

by

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Abstract

While statistics have shown that up to 28% of palliative patients have alcohol use disorder (AUD), research has shown that up to 86% of these patients are undiagnosed at the time of palliative referral. This DNP quality improvement project is guided by the Humanistic Nursing Theory (HNT) and employs a validated alcohol use screening tool to improve alcohol use screening for palliative patients as part of an alcohol use screening protocol. The Knowledge-to-Action (KTA) framework was used to guide the project's implementation. Participating staff were educated on the protocol during a face-to-face education session that was recorded and made available on the project site's learning management system. Data from the pre-implementation and implementation phases were collected using a chart audit review. The results were analyzed using a chi-square test of homogeneity to determine if the proportion of patients screened for alcohol use was the same in each project phase. The results showed that there was a significant increase in the rate of screening for alcohol use on admission to the project site during the implementation period as compared to pre-implementation ($p = .003$). A paired t-test was used to analyze the results of the pre-and post-education survey administered to the staff that attended the education session. Overall, attendees perceived their knowledge about alcohol use disorder in palliative patients in relation to their role when working with them improved significantly ($p = .009$), as did their knowledge of their role and responsibilities in relation to caring for palliative patients with AUD ($p = .007$). The result was significant at the $p < .05$ level. The results of this DNP project add to the limited body of knowledge about screening for and managing AUD in palliative care.

Keywords: palliative care, alcohol use disorder, AUD, AUDIT-C, alcohol use screening tool, Knowledge-to-Action, Humanistic Nursing Theory

