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Staff Education on Psychoeducational Interventions for Older Patients with Mood Disorder

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Executive Summary: Staff Education Project

Staff Education on Psychoeducational Interventions for Older Patients with Mood Disorder

by

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Summary

Mood disorders are relatively common among the elderly, with depression being the most prevalent. Older adults with mood disorders often face unique challenges, leading to inadequate treatment and poor outcomes. Studies demonstrate a link between inadequate psychoeducation and lower medication adherence rates, as patients may not fully understand the importance of taking medication consistently or may have concerns about side effects without proper explanation. Limited access to educational materials or training for psychiatric nurse practitioners on psychoeducation, high patient loads, and limited consultation times may hinder the delivery of effective psychoeducation.

This DNP staff educational project focused on increasing the knowledge of psychiatric nurse practitioners using structured educational intervention on psychoeducational techniques for older patients with mood disorders. A mixed-methods analytical approach, including pre -and post-intervention assessments and qualitative feedback, were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. The findings demonstrated a significant increase in staff knowledge on psychoeducational interventions for older patients with mood disorders. Major products of the project included comprehensive PowerPoint slides training psychoeducational interventions tailored for older adults. The implications for nursing practice include integrating psychoeducational practices into routine care, promoting mental health literacy among staff, and enhancing the quality of care. Furthermore, the project supports positive social change by fostering an inclusive environment that acknowledges the diverse needs of older adults with mood disorders, ultimately promoting equity and cultural sensitivity.

Background

There is a vast increase in the aging population, and there is an increased prevalence of mood disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorder, among older adults that require specialized care tailored to this age group since mood disorders can significantly impact their quality of life (Cybulski et al., 2020). Associated factors such as medical conditions, medication side effects, social isolation, loss of loved ones, and decreased mobility often contribute to mood disorders in this age group (National Institute on Aging, 2019). There is abundant research that supports the importance of psychoeducational interventions for elderly patients with mood disorders (Burke et al., 2024). However, a gap remains in translating this significant evidence into routine practice for the elderly population. Despite the benefits of psychoeducation interventions, there is a gap in the implementation of these interventions in nursing practice, partly due to the insufficient knowledge among psychiatric nurse practitioners regarding the implementation of psychoeducational interventions for elderly adults with mood disorders.

Studies have highlighted the limited formal education, exposure, and training that psychiatric nurse practitioners receive during their formal education in school. This results in a deficit of knowledge that hinders the application of specific psychoeducation strategies that effectively address mood disorder challenges in this population. Through targeted education, psychiatric nurse practitioners can increase their knowledge base, confidence, and competencies in managing complex cases and improving patient outcomes. This DNP staff education project aimed to increase the staff's knowledge about psychoeducational interventions for older patients with mood disorders. The

project question guiding the project was, “Will staff education programs on psychoeducational interventions increase staff knowledge in managing elderly patients with mood disorders?”

Evidence Supporting the Change and the Strength of Evidence

In searching the existing psychiatry literature, there is evidence that supports increased mood disorders in older adults and insufficient psychoeducational knowledge among psychiatric nurse practitioners tailored toward older adults. Surveys and qualitative studies have identified substantial gaps in psychiatric nurse practitioners’ understanding of the unique manifestations and treatment needs of mood disorders in the elderly population (Forsman et al., 2018). For example, Forsman et al. (2018) analyzed the effectiveness of the various psychoeducational interventions that are aimed at preventing and managing depression among elderly patients but found psychiatric nurse practitioners may not be equipped with the required knowledge and skills to deliver these psychoeducational interventions effectively. The findings showed that psychoeducation programs, if implemented correctly, can effectively reduce the prevalence and incidence of depression in older adults. This evidence is at the high level of evidence, Level 1, since it comes from Cochrane systemic review, and comprehensive methodology was used with rigorous standards, assessing and synthesizing research.

Another literature review by Smith et al. (2020) discussed the effectiveness of psychoeducational interventions tailored for elderly patients with mood disorders. Results of these studies showed that psychoeducational interventions significantly improved the patient’s cognition and mood. They emphasized the need for well-trained psychiatric nurse practitioners to implement these strategies effectively. This study used a

randomized control trial (RCT), and RCTs provide Level 1 evidence with robust data that is the gold standard for evaluating the efficacy of interventions.

Additionally, Portela Dos Santos et al. (2022) focused on the effectiveness of educational interventions to enhance evidence-based practice skills among nurses. While the article itself does not explicitly address psychoeducational interventions for elderly patients with mood disorders, it provides valuable insights into the broader context of educational interventions in healthcare settings. This study evaluated the systematic evaluates various educational interventions to improve nurses' skills in evidence-based practice (EBP). The results showed that structured educational programs, including workshops, online courses, and blended learning approaches, can significantly enhance nurses' EBP skills. This improvement in EBP skills is crucial for implementing effective psychoeducational interventions, as it ensures that nurses are equipped with the latest research and best practices. Further, Reynolds et al. (2022) showed how psychoeducational interventions can improve treatment adherence, enhance understanding of mood disorders, and empower patients in managing their conditions in older adults. The interventions used in this article included education about the disorder, treatment options, and strategies for coping and self-management. The strength of the evidence is that it includes multiple systemic and RCTs that show consistent positive outcomes, and systemic and RCTs are considered gold standards for research.

Staff Education Project Development

This staff education program was developed to increase staff on psychoeducational interventions for older adults with mood disorders and the educational program for the project was developed using current evidence-based practice literature.

Participants

The participants for this DNP educational project were staff (specifically psychiatric nurse practitioners) who consented and demonstrated their interest and willingness to participate in the study and to support this project's objectives. A total of 28 participants were recruited to participate in the study. However, eight never attended educational sessions, leaving a total of 20 participants. Participants were informed of the objectives and the completion of the pre-education and post-educational tests. The project participants were also reassured that no names and identification would be required on any of the project documents, and they would remain anonymous. Psychiatric nurse practitioners play a vital role in diagnosing, treating, and managing the mental healthcare care of older adults (Cai et al., 2022), making their involvement in this project significant.

Procedures

Several key steps were involved in developing, implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention of this DNP project. It started with creating educational content to effectively carry information on mood disorders and psychoeducational interventions targeting elderly patients. Power presentations were used to deliver this content to the staff, ensuring that this information was completely delivered in a clear and organized manner. The PowerPoint presentation covered important topics such as common mood disorders in older adults, the goals of psychoeducational interventions, and the key components that make these interventions effective.

Data were collected from pre- and post-education questionnaires. The tests consisted of multiple-choice and questions covering key areas of psychoeducational interventions, including therapeutic communication, psychoeducation techniques, and

management strategies for mood disorders. Multiple-choice questions provided easily quantifiable data by offering predefined answer options, (Paradis et al., 2018). The pre-test was scheduled before the intervention, and the post-test was administered after the intervention to evaluate if there was knowledge gained. The Power Point workshops and seminars were offered at different times and days over a period of 4 weeks to ensure maximum total attendance of participants on this project.

The data gathered from questionnaires were entered into excel and analyzed using SPSS version 24. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, including mean, median, and standard deviation for both pre-test and post-test scores. Descriptive statistics are crucial in data analysis because they concisely summarize key characteristics within a dataset, making it easier to understand overall trends, identify patterns, and visualize data (Cooksey, 2020). An ANOVA single test was used to calculate the mean and the variance, and the paired *t* test was used to compare the means of two related groups. The paired *t* test is important when comparing before and after measurements from the same subjects because it allows researchers to eliminate variability between groups (Mishra et al., 2019).

Results

A total of 20 participants were involved in the study with six males and 14 females. Post-implementation results illustrated a substantial increase in correct responses to questionnaire items, signifying an enhanced understanding of key concepts (see Table 1). For instance, the staff significantly improved their ability to accurately identify common mood disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorder, in older adults, and recognized the essential goal of psychoeducational interventions to increase patient

understanding and management of their condition. Also, participants demonstrated improved proficiency in recognizing key components of psychoeducational interventions, such as educating patients about their mental health conditions. This increase in knowledge is indicative of the project's success and suggests potential improvements in clinical practice and patient outcomes.

Table 1

Pre and Posttest Scores on Psychoeducational Interventions

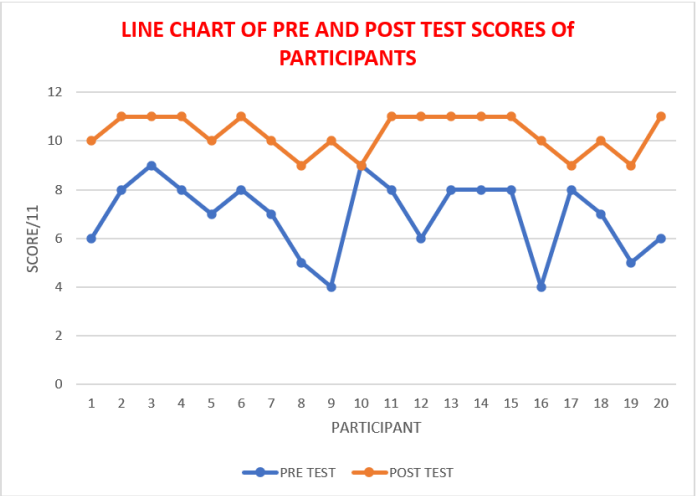
Number		Pretest	Posttest	Difference	Percentage score increase
1		6	10	4	36.4
2		8	11	3	27.3
3		9	11	2	18.2
4		8	11	3	27.3
5		7	10	3	27.3
6		8	11	3	27.3
7		7	10	3	27.3
8		5	9	4	36.4
9		4	10	6	54.5
10		9	9	0	0.0
11		8	11	3	27.3
12		6	11	5	45.5
13		8	11	3	27.3
14		8	11	3	27.3
15		8	11	3	27.3
16		4	10	6	54.5
17		8	9	1	9.1
18		7	10	3	27.3
19		5	9	4	36.4
20		6	11	5	45.5
	M	6.95	10.3	3.35	30.45454545
	Mode	8	11	3	27.27272727
	SD	1.5381123	0.801314709	1.460893742	13.2808522

Based on the results, the mean score improved from 6.95 in the pre-test to 10.3 in the post-test, reflecting a substantial gain in staff knowledge. The median score increased from 7.5 to 10.5, and the mode shifted from 8 to 11, suggesting that more participants scored higher after the intervention. This represents a mean difference of 2.41 points or

an increase in the posttest score for knowledge on average of approximately 21.86 percentage points. The standard deviations for pre-test and post-test scores were 1.54 and 0.80, respectively, indicating reduced score variability after the intervention. A total mean gain of 30.45 in percentage point scores demonstrates a substantial impact of educational intervention. This increase indicates that the participants notably improved their knowledge of psychoeducational interventions for elderly patients with mood disorders because of the training. These results underscore the effectiveness of the educational project in enhancing the competency of psychiatric nurse practitioners in managing mood disorders using psychoeducational interventions. For example, in Figure 1, Participant 9 showed a remarkable increase from a pre-test score of 4 to a post-test score of 10, reflecting an average percentage point score increase of 54.5. Similarly, Participant 16 exhibited identical gains. Most participants showed a consistent improvement range between 18.2 and 54.5.

Figure 1

Pre and Posttest Scores



Further, the pre-test results showed an average score of 6.95 with a variance of 2.37, indicating the initial baseline knowledge of the participants before the educational program (see Table 2). After the intervention, the post-test average increased to 10.3 with a significantly reduced variance of 0.64, suggesting a more consistent and improved understanding of the subject matter among participants.

Table 2

*Pre and Posttest Assessment Summary Using Anova Single Factor Test (*N = *20)*

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
PRE TEST	20	139	6.95	2.365789
POST TEST	20	206	10.3	0.642105

Impact on the Organization

The implementation of this DNP project had a significant impact on the outpatient mental health clinic by improving the knowledge base of psychiatric nurse practitioners regarding psychoeducational interventions for elderly patients with mood disorders. By equipping staff with enhanced educational tools and strategies, the project contributed to improved patient-centered care, fostering a more informed and practical approach to managing mood disorders in the elderly. One direct impact was the enhancement of clinical competency among psychiatric nurse practitioners, leading to more structured psychoeducational sessions for patients. Also, as an institution with knowledgeable and well-trained staff, the outpatient mental health clinic can enhance its reputation, making it a more desirable place for treatment and for new staff to want to join.

Limitations and their Impact on Results

The project was affected by several limitations that impacted its outcomes, including participant attrition, a small sample size, limited follow-up periods, self-reported assessments, and its single-site study design. Initially, 28 participants were recruited, but only 20 completed the educational sessions and pre/post-tests. This attrition rate of approximately 29% possibly skewed the results, as those who dropped out might have possessed differing levels of baseline knowledge or engagement with the psychoeducational interventions offered. Consequently, the findings are not easily generalizable. A more substantial participant pool would have enhanced the study's validity and reliability, and future research could mitigate this limitation by broadening participation across multiple outpatient clinics or involving a more diverse group of mental health professionals beyond psychiatric nurse practitioners.

Additionally, the study's focus on immediate knowledge gain was a limitation, as it lacked long-term follow-up to assess the retention of information over time and its actual impact on clinical practice. Future research should incorporate longitudinal follow-ups to determine if the educational interventions lead to sustained improvements in patient care and clinical decision-making practices. By extending the assessment window beyond immediate pre- and post-tests, future studies could better evaluate whether the knowledge gained is translated into ongoing clinical improvements. Addressing these limitations would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of psychoeducational interventions in mental health settings.

Importance Beyond the Local Site

The project holds significant potential beyond its initial implementation in a single outpatient clinic, as it offers an adaptable educational framework for pediatric nurse practitioners that can be utilized across various mental health settings, such as inpatient psychiatric units, primary care clinics, and community health centers. This framework aligns with the growing emphasis on evidence-based practice in mental health care, providing a structured educational program that other organizations can tailor to their specific needs. Doing so serves as a model for enhancing mental health care delivery across diverse settings.

Furthermore, the project addresses the rising prevalence of mood disorders among the elderly, highlighting the urgent need for evidence-based psychoeducational interventions. Depression and anxiety in older adults are often overlooked due to stigma and insufficient provider awareness. By improving provider knowledge, the project aims to enhance management strategies that can be implemented on a regional and national scale, thereby addressing this care gap. The study's findings could influence training requirements for mental health professionals and aid in developing standardized guidelines for incorporating psychoeducation into routine psychiatric care for elderly patients. Additionally, policymakers and healthcare administrators might leverage these results to promote mandatory continuing education programs focused on psychoeducational strategies in geriatric mental health care.

Conclusions

The implementation of the DNP educational project significantly enhanced the knowledge and skills of psychiatric nurse practitioners in psychoeducational

interventions for elderly patients with mood disorders, engaging 20 participants through educational sessions and workshops. This initiative led to a measurable improvement in their understanding and ability to apply these interventions, thereby improving the quality of care for elderly patients and contributing to the professional development of the nursing staff, in line with the organization's commitment to excellence in patient care.

Future recommendations include expanding the program to involve a wider range of psychiatric professionals and staff from other departments, utilizing diverse educational methods like interactive simulations to enhance engagement and memory retention, conducting long-term follow-up assessments to ensure sustained application of knowledge, and incorporating participant feedback to refine the program for future iterations. By providing staff with tools for culturally competent and inclusive care, it strengthens the organization's commitment to diversity and health equity. Additionally, it serves as a model for other healthcare institutions to foster inclusive practices, ensuring all individuals feel respected and valued, thereby promoting equitable healthcare outcomes.

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Appendix: Pre and Posttest Education Questions

Demographic Data

1. **Sex:** A). Male B) Female

1. **Identify Common mood Disorders in Older Adults**: A). depression B). bipolar disorder

C). anxiety disorders, D). schizophrenia

E. All of the Above **F. A and B only (Correct Answer**

2. What is the primary goal of psychoeducational interventions for older patients with mood disorders?

A) To provide psychotherapy sessions

B) To educate patients about medication side effects

C) To increase patients' understanding and management of their mood disorder (**Correct Answer)**

D) To replace pharmacological treatments entirely

3. Which of the following is a key component of psychoeducational interventions

A) Diagnosing new conditions

B) Educating patients about their mental health condition **(Correct Answer)**

C) Prescribing medication

D) Conducting lab tests

4**. What is the most effective method for Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner to deliver Psychoeducational Interventions**

A) Lecture-style presentations

B) Individual/ group educational sessions **(Correct Answer)**

C) Printed materials only

Recorded video sessions with no interaction

5. How does Psychoeducation benefit older patients with mood disorders

A) It typically resolves disorders without any further treatment

B) It increases adherence to treatment plans **(Correct Answer)**

C) It guarantees immediate improvement in mood

D) It eliminates the need for professional counseling

6.) To optimize learning, educational sessions for older adults should be

A) Long and detailed

B) Short and focused (Correct Answer)

C) Highly technical

D) Conducted infrequently

7). **Which of the following is an essential skill that Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners need to effectively conduct Psychoeducational interventions?**

A) Advanced Pharmacology knowledge

B) Strong communication and interpersonal skills **(Correct Answer)**

C) Ability to conduct physical exams

D) Skill in surgical procedures

8. What is a common barrier older adults might face when engaging in Psychoeducational interventions?

A) Their interest in learning new material

B) Memory and cognitive impairments (**Correct Answer)**

C) Physical mobility

D) Lack of healthcare access

9. What outcome can improved knowledge from Psychoeducational Interventions lead to for older patients?

A) Increased frustration with medical professionals

B) Enhanced self-efficacy and self-management of their condition **(Correct Answer)**

C) Greater dependency on family members

D) Confusion about their treatment plan

10. How often should a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner provide psychoeducation to a Patient/

A) During every visit **(Correct Answer)**

B) Once a month

C) Every 3 months

D) Once a year

11. Measuring the effectiveness of Psychoeducational interventions typically involves assessing change in?

A) Patients' diet and nutrition habits

B) Patients' knowledge and behavior regarding their condition **(Correct Answer)**

C) Nurse Practitioners' knowledge of pharmacology