C5-21: Current Pain Management Issues among Direct Care Nurses

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Abstract:
Introduction: The purpose of this study was to explore current issues among direct care nurses concerning pain management using a qualitative method. Much of the current pain research uses a quantitative approach, which offers little understanding of the reasons why the prevalence of pain has not changed significantly over several decades, despite the advancement in pain relieving technologies. Issues that were explored include nurses’ attitudes and perceived barriers to managing pain. Information about nurses’ concerns and perceptions of pain management allows interventions to improve pain management to be based on the real experiences and needs of nurses today.

Method(s): Following informed consent, individual interviews with nurses were done using a consistent set of questions to explore issues surrounding pain management in an acute care hospital. The study sample included 12 direct care nurses from a variety of medical and surgical units. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data were analyzed using content analysis. Recurring concepts were extracted from the data, and themes were generated by grouping similar phenomena into conceptual clusters. This data analysis process was performed for each of the interviews.

Results: The primary theme identified was that time was a barrier to optimal pain management. Other consistent themes included the lack of integration of nonpharmacologic pain relief strategies into routine pain management by nurses, and the perception that both nurses and physicians do an effective job in managing pain optimally. Additional information provided by the nurses was not consistent among participants, but provided insight into the everyday management of pain in the acute care hospital.
Discussion & Conclusions: These results support the need for an innovative educational program that can inform nurses how nonpharmacologic pain management strategies can be integrated into their practice. Using a more innovative methodology to deliver the education, such as an interactive computer-based simulation, may increase nurse participation and knowledge retention, with greater potential to change practice and ultimately impact the pain experience of those in acute care hospitals.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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