Delirium Rates Increasing in Elderly Hospitalized Patients
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BACKGROUND

- Delirium is a disturbance in attention, awareness, and cognition over a short period of time not explained by another neurocognitive disorder³
- The prevalence of delirium among the general population is 2%, and as high as 56% in hospitalized adults⁷
- Delirium is associated with higher mortality rates and poorer post-hospitalization outcomes²

MATERIALS & METHODS

- Databases searched include CINHAL Complete, Science Direct, PubMed, and SAGE
- Search terms: delirium, elderly, hospital*
- Tannahill Model of Health promotion designed by Andrew Tannahill guided the literature review as a theoretical framework

PURPOSE

- To explore the prevalence of delirium in elderly hospitalized patients
- To explore current nursing practices that may contribute to the increase or decrease in rates of delirium
- To explore alternatives to hospitalization that provide care to elderly patients resulting in lower rates of delirium

RESULTS

Nursing Approach
- The most common factors precipitating delirium include infection, dehydration, immobility, and malnutrition³
- Core nursing interventions address these factors, but insufficient time in the hospital setting prevent fulfillment of all of the needs of each patient¹

Alternatives to Hospitalization
- Hospice care, home health, and centers with all-inclusive care for the elderly may provide needed, interdisciplinary, and holistic care preventing delirium and poor outcomes⁴

Barriers to Care
- Delirium-preventative care for elderly patients requires coordinated, interdisciplinary care and case management in an “elder friendly” facility⁴
- There are limited adequate identification methods for delirium⁶

CONCLUSIONS

- Delirium remains under detected in elderly hospitalized patients³
- Screening tools such as Confusion Assessment Method (CAM) may facilitate earlier detection of delirium³
- Hospital systems need to implement more “elder friendly” environments, equipped with appropriate staff and equipment to fulfill all of the complex needs of elderly patients⁵

NURSING IMPLICATIONS

- A nursing focus on fulfilling basic needs of patients (mobility, hydration, nutrition) can help to prevent delirium
- Nurses play an essential role in providing complete care to elderly patients
- Nurses can advocate for changes within their medical facility to better serve the elder population