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Experience in and Attitude towards the Use of Restraints on Demented Patients Among the Nursing Staff Survey Results

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Introduction

1. 21 September 2006 is the World Alzheimer's Day. In light of this, the Jockey Club Centre for Positive Ageing, School of Public Health, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Nethersole School of Nursing have jointly conducted a survey on "Experience in and Attitude towards the Use of Restraints on Demented Patients Among the Nursing Staff". The aims of this survey were: (a) To explore the universality of and attitude towards the use of physical restraints on demented patients among the nursing staff; and (b) To understand the reasons why the nursing staff use restraints in the course of taking care of demented patients. It is hoped that the result of this survey would help to improve the medical service and to assist the relevant departments and organizations to impose corresponding measures.

Method

2. A total of 168 nursing staff having experience in taking care of demented patients (comprising 121 nurses and 47 nursing assistants) participated in the study. The respondents' ages range from 20 to 58 with an average of 37. The average length of experience was 9.5 years.
3. The subjects of the survey include the experience in and the reasons of using body and behavioral restraints in taking care of demented patients in the past three months and their attitudes towards and views on demented patients etc.

Experience in Using Physical Restraints

4. 75% of the respondents indicated that they had used different degrees of physical restraints in the past three months.
5. 64.9% of the respondents had “used belts or other materials to tie patients to beds or chairs”
6. 51.8% of the respondents had “used other types of body restraints like straitjackets, safety vests and gloves etc.”; 42.9% had “used bed drills against the patients’ wishes”; 31% had “segregated the patients”.

Reasons of Using Restraints

7. A vast majority of the respondents (98.4%) pointed out that an important factor leading them to use body restraints was “to prevent the demented patients from hindering medical activities”, which included “preventing the demented patients from pulling off feeding tubes / IV drips” or “preventing the demented patients from tearing open a recovering wound / removing dressing”.
8. 94.6% of the respondents pointed out that another important factor was “to avoid the demented patients from falling down”, which included “protecting the elderly from falling down from chairs/beds” and “protecting the elderly from falls because of their shaky legs”.
9. 93% of the respondents said that they used body restraints to “prevent the demented patients from bothering other patients”, which included “protecting other patients from suffering from physical abusiveness” and “Keeping confused patients from bothering others” and “preventing the patients from taking other people’s belongings”.
10. However, 41.9% of the respondents also indicated that “Colleagues in favor of restraint use” (42.6%) and “Prevalence of restraint use” (41.9%) were important factors in their determining whether restraints were to be used.

Comparing the Personal Characteristics of those Respondents using and not using Restraints

11. The survey revealed that the respondents who had used restraints in the past three months had shorter tenures than those respondents who had not used restraints and many of them considered that they did not have sufficient training for taking daily care of demented patients.
12. The respondents who had used restraints in general had more positive attitude towards demented patients.

Recommendation

Based on the above findings, we have the following recommendations:

13. More training in relation to taking care of demented patients to frontline nursing staff should be provided.
14. A cross-sectional collaboration among the government, NGOs and professional groups should launch public education program that aims at improving attitudes of the public towards demented patients as well as proper knowledge on dementia.
15. More researches should be conducted on dementia, in order to gain better understanding of the situation of dementia in Hong Kong. The resultant findings would aid public education and strengthen the community's understanding of dementia and assist concerned departments and organizations in formulating appropriate course of action.

20 September 2006

Table 1: Respondents' Experience in Restraint Use in the Past 3 months

	Total (N=168)
Using one or more of the below physical restraints	75.0%
Using belts or other materials to tie patients to the beds or chairs	64.9%
Using other types of body restraints like straitjackets, safety vests and gloves etc.	51.8%
Using bed drills against the patients' wishes	42.9%
Segregating the patients	31.0%
Locking patients in a room	6.0%

Table 2: Reasons for using restraints

	Total (N=168)
To prevent the demented patients from hindering medical activities	98.4%
Preventing the demented patients from pulling out a catheter	95.3%
Preventing the demented patients from tearing open a recovering wound	94.6%
Preventing the demented patients from pulling out feeding tubes	94.6%
Preventing the demented patients from pulling out inter vascular drip	93.8%
preventing the demented patients from removing dressing	86.0%
To avoid the demented patients from falls	94.6%
Protecting the elderly from falling down from chairs	94.6%
Protecting the elderly from falling down from beds	93.8%
Protecting the elderly from falling down because of their shaky legs	91.5%
To prevent the demented patients from harassing other patients	93.0%
Keeping confused patients from bothering others	98.4%
Protecting other patients from suffering from physical abusiveness	82.9%
Preventing patients from taking other people's belongings	62.8%
Colleagues in favor of restraint use	42.6%
Prevalence of restraint use	41.9%

Table 3: Personal Characteristics of Respondents using and not using Restraints

	Used Restraints (N=135)	Did not use restraints (N=33)
Tenure*	8.8	11.5
Considered training insufficient for them to take daily care of demented patients*	81.7%	63.6%
positive attitude towards demented patients *	55.5%	39.3%

Note: * Significant Group Differences