Aim:

- Case study of a hospice patient combined with a literature review to establish what communication difficulties can be experienced by nursing staff caring for a patient with MND.
- Identify ways in which nurses can improve their knowledge of AAC to better care for this patient group.
- Identify assessment tools which can assist with achieving the most appropriate AAC.

Frustration

- Patients – Anxiety and frustration when communicating with nurses.
- Nurses – Frustrated at lack of ability to communicate with patients.
- Patients disadvantaged during hospital stay if unmet complex communication needs.
- Care givers – Fear patients are left due to poor communication (Finke et al, 2008)

Time

- Lack of time is frequently reported to be a barrier to successful communication between nurses and their patients with complex communication needs.
- Allocating time to explore and develop alternative strategies for communication is an important aspect of facilitating communication. (Hemsley et al, 2012)

Training

- Nurses need to learn about a variety of aided and unaided AAC systems to improve the communication experience.
- In the Charter of Patient rights and responsibilities 2011 – In order to communicate and participate – patients have: the right to be informed, and involved, in decisions about health care and services -
  - "Ask any question if you do not understand something.
  - "Ask for more information if you want to know more".
  - "Be given information in a way you can understand".
  - "If you need an interpreter or a sign-language interpreter, or other communication support, you can ask a member of staff to arrange help for you in advance". www.gov.scot/resource/0039/00390989.pdf

Person centred health and care

- Must do with me:
  - What matters to you
  - Who matters to you
  - What information do you need
  - Nothing about me without me
  - Personalised contact (www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/person-centred_care/person-centred_programme.aspx)

Strategies for Interaction

- Determine the modes of communication used by the patient.
- Pause or wait to allow time for patient to participate in the interaction.
- Nurse should maintain eye contact and show an expectant facial expression.
- Confirm the message communicated by the patient.
- Use AAC to support understanding if necessary.

Nurse involvement in AAC assessment

- All reviewed literature suggests that nurses have a vital role to play in contributing to assessment for AAC.
- The holistic nature of nursing assessment has much to offer in support of AAC assessment and the provision of patient-centred care.

Conclusions

- Patients report frustration and dissatisfaction with care when communication is impaired.
- Nurses report similar frustration along with feelings of guilt and helplessness when they are unable to meet patients needs.
- Lack of time can be a major barrier to effective communication between nurses and patients.
- Nurses lack of knowledge of AAC is a barrier to effective communication.
- Holistic assessment is vital to achieving most appropriate AAC. Nurses should be involved in this multidisciplinary process.

Results/Outcomes

- Nurses should be targeted for training in AAC to help them support patients with complex communication needs, such as those with MND.
- This could be implemented at undergraduate level and supported as part of continuing professional development.

References/any other relevant resources


Person centred health and care

www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/person-centred_care/person-centred_programme.aspx

Patient centred care - Improving Quality in the English NHS www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/quality-improvement?gclid=CMuY-7u-7c0CFQso0wodAy0DsA


