

A NURSING INTERVENTION FOR SLEEP PROMOTION

Robinetta Wheeler, RN, PhD

Stanford Hospital and Clinics

Contact email address: rwheeler@stanfordmed.org

Abstract – Final Report

Purpose

The goal of the study was to determine the effect of taking a sleep history, within 24 hours of admission, providing sleep promotion information to patients and having a “sleep tools” basket containing non-pharmacological items available for sleep promotion activities.

Background

A review of sleep related practices suggested the need for further study. Chart review data showed patients admitted without previously prescribed sleep medication were prescribed sleep medication upon discharge. Nurses referred patients who reported sleep problems to physicians for medication. The nursing documentation consisted of the assessed total number of hours slept. Interviews with RN staff indicated their concern about patients’ lack of sleep, interrupted sleep and lack of a sleep hygiene program to assist patients.

Methods

The project was conducted on an inpatient behavioral medicine unit for patients with diagnoses of major depression, bipolar affective disorder, anorexia/eating disorder, or acute anxiety. A sleep assessment tool was administered to patients within 24-hours of admission. A set of “sleep tools” was available for nurses to use as planned interventions to promote sleep. Charts were audited for nursing documentation of sleep promotion interventions, evaluation of the intervention’s effectiveness and language used to describe nursing actions. Patients were informed about the sleep project and asked to evaluate tools, if used.

Results

Twenty-two (16 females/6 males) sleep assessments were completed (56% of patients admitted in July and August 2008). Twelve of the 22 assessments met the criteria for referral to a sleep specialist. One patient had a prior diagnosis of sleep apnea. The chart audit showed no significant change in content of nursing documentation. Documentation about completion of the sleep assessment and/or use of the sleep basket was found in two charts. One completed evaluation by a patient was obtained.

Discussion

The effect of taking a sleep assessment, providing sleep promotion information and having a sleep tools basket was to increase awareness of patients’ sleep needs. Nurses conducted sleep assessments and provided sleep promotion education using items from the sleep tools basket. Unfortunately, their documentation was missing. Limitations of the study included short lead-time from orientation to implementation, only 68% of the RN staff oriented, sleep assessments on only 56% of admitted patients and minimal outcome

data. Confounding variables included staffing shortage due to vacations and illness, float staff, changes in RN charting associated with the recently adopted computer based charting (CBC) system, study components not integrated into the CBC, and the sleep tools baskets stored in a closet (“out of sight”).

Implications/Conclusions

The sleep assessment data concurs with that from other studies, indicating sleep related problems are common in our patient population. Nurses will provide sleep promotion education and teach associated skills to patients when resources are available. Additional data needs to be collected and project procedures revised to increase documentation.

Key Words

Sleep Promotion and Nursing intervention