



A Quality Improvement Project: An Educational Program for Nurses to Improve the Care for Patients Diagnosed with Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome



Daniel Davidson BSN, RN, PCCN - Teresa Rangel PhD, MSN, RN, CNL - Kallie Anderson, MSN, RN, PCCN - Tobi Bryan MSN, RN, CCRN - Cassie Baune BSN, RN

Background

- Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome (AWS) is ubiquitous throughout inpatient populations & associated with high mortality
- Increased mortality is associated with inadequate screening & early recognition, incomplete execution of treatment protocols, and qualities of the healthcare providers caring for this patient population, including:
 - negative attitudes & perceptions
 - poor therapeutic commitment
 - low role security
- Education & training improves these traits in registered nurses (RNs)
- RNs at Providence Holy Family Hospital's Advanced Care Unit (ACU) are not offered formal education on AWS & receive minimal training on the gold-standard treatment protocol, the Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment-Alcohol Revised (CIWA-Ar)

Purpose

- To determine whether formalized AWS education will improve nurses' attitudes, therapeutic commitment, and role security concerning patients diagnosed with AWS

Methods

- An evidenced-based education was offered to the ACU RNs on topics pertinent to caring for patients diagnosed with AWS
- Pre- & post-education surveys with a revised version of the Short Alcohol and Alcohol Problems Perception Questionnaire (SAAPPQ) were completed
- SAAPPQ is validated & reliably quantifies health caregivers' attitudes, therapeutic commitment, & role security pertaining patients' with alcohol-related complications

Results

- 69% (n=41) of the ACU RNs completed the pre-education survey
- 32% (n=19) completed the post-education survey
- Mean SAAPPQ scores improved by 12.8% (p=0.006) after education
- Mean therapeutic commitment scores improved by 12% (p=0.04) after education
- Mean role security scores improved by 13.9% (p=0.001) after education

Discussion

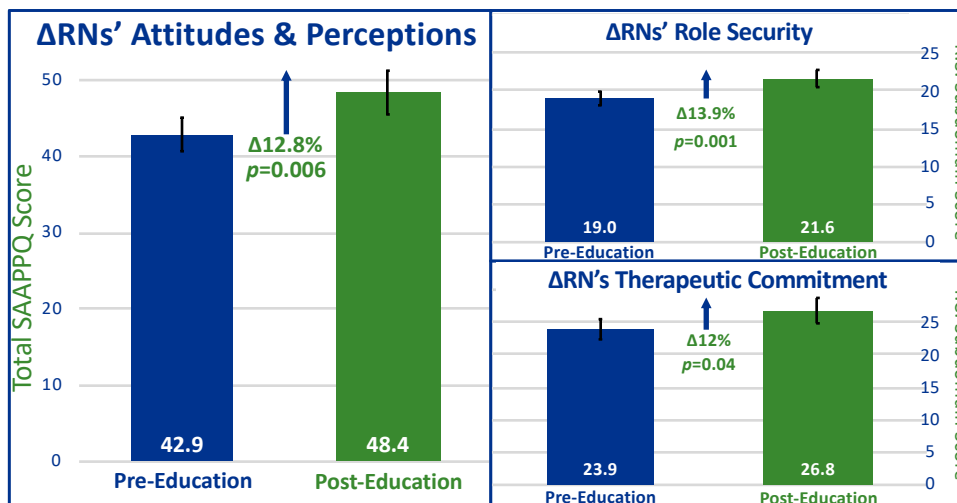
- Regarding the treatment of patients diagnosed with AWS, post-education results suggest that ACU RNs are more likely to:
 - portray positive attitudes (total SAAPPQ)
 - find the work rewarding personally & professionally (*therapeutic commitment*)
 - perceive themselves as adequately skilled & knowledgeable (*role security*)
- The measured changes subsequent the completion of the education suggest ACU RNs are better prepared to provide high-quality care for this vulnerable population

Implications for Practice

- Caring for patients with AWS is complex and having gaps in care may lead to negative patient outcomes including death
- Education on how to apply high-quality evidence toward caring for hospitalized patients with AWS is the first step toward improving outcomes for this population
- Further work is required to deduce the direct impact of this education on patient-related outcomes

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*All values reported are based on ordinal data