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Use of interdisciplinary simulation to improve student knowledge, skill and attitude in a nursing care of older adults course

Rita K Young

The University of Akron, USA

Nursing care of older adults is an eight-weeks required junior level course that previously had only didactic and clinical experiences addressing the Knowledge, Skill, and Attitude domains of learning; and only minimal low-level simulation activities. Faculty developed two uniquely unfolding cases using the ACES (Advancing Care Excellence for Seniors) framework, which guides nursing education and clinical practice in the care of older adults, in five hi-fidelity lab simulations; and one unfolding case study using a standardized patient.

The first case, employed for two labs, is an older Mennonite male with apparent depression and hearing deficit. The second case, employed for three labs, is an older African American female admitted with heart failure, who develops pneumonia, urinary tract infection, confusion, and experiences a fall; representing cascade iatrogenesis. Since the cases unfold throughout the five labs in much the same way problems develop in care settings, students have ongoing exposure to core concepts and the opportunity to develop deeper understanding. The third case is run in a different section of the lab for three sessions and includes consultations with other disciplines in the College of Health Professions. Student evaluations of the simulation activities were positive. Objectives related to student confidence with gerontological competencies increased. The ACES format supported simulation design and understanding between disciplines regarding roles and responsibilities. More study is needed to evaluate student learning outcomes and application of learning to clinical practice.

Biography

Rita K Young is a Senior Instructor of Nursing at The University of Akron College of Nursing. She teaches Nursing Care of Older Adults, Pathophysiology, and Foundations of Nursing Practice. Prior to teaching, she worked as a Team Supervisor, a Case Manager and a Certified Diabetes Educator in home care for many years. She has participated in research focused on decreasing amputations in diabetic patients, and educational modules for diabetes management as part of a multidisciplinary team. She has presented locally, nationally, and internationally on these topics as well as on-line teaching and teaching with patient simulators. She received a diploma from Akron General Medical Center School of Nursing, and her BSN and MSN from the University of Akron.

ryoung1@uakron.edu