Evaluation of an E-Learning Package on Dementia for Hospital Staff
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Introduction

Dementia is often unrecognised by nurses and there was a lack of training in dementia care for acute hospital staff. In 2009 Alzheimer’s Society report ‘Counting the Cost’1 highlighted deficiencies in acute hospital care of patients with dementia. The NICE Quality Standard 20102 recommended that people with dementia should receive care from appropriately trained staff.

In 2011 we managed to train around 50 staff in North Cumbria University Hospitals Trust in arrangement with Bradford University. However this was very expensive and we needed a more cost effective way of training over a thousand hospital staff who have contact with dementia.

E-learning is recognised as a very cost effective method of delivering education and training, especially related to NICE guidelines3. In 2012 we delivered an e-learning package designed to cover the curriculum recommended by NICE and also concentrated on tackling the deficits in care identified in the ‘Counting the Cost’ report.

Methods

The e-learning package was approved by the North Cumbria University Hospitals Trust and was installed on the hospital NLMS website.

The aim of the e-learning course was that learners should be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of dementia, understand the pharmacological treatment of dementia and the dangers of anti-psychotic drugs and be able to devise a person centred care plan for a patient with dementia in hospital.

The results of the first 25 feedback questionnaires were analysed to evaluate the value of the e-learning package.

Results

Over 90% of participants said the course improved their understanding and met their learning needs. Over 60% of participants said the quality of the package was good or excellent, with over 80% stating they would recommend the package to colleagues.

Discussion

The results show that most people found this to be a useful e-learning package, which they would recommend to others. The comments showed that the learning gained will be used to inform other members of staff about dementia and delirium which was an aim of the package. Comments regarding technical problems will be addressed in order to improve the quality of the e-learning package. It was commented that the package should be more widely advertised and more available to a greater audience. Following on from the feedback, the package will be developed further, to include more topics on delirium and other related packages. It is also being developed to be used on a website outside of the trust, which will make it accessible to staff in residential and nursing homes.

We suggest that this learning package should become part of mandatory training.

References