Patients with Dementia in Hospital -
Personalising their Care and Nutritional Needs

Colleen Cherry, Sarah Church, Mark Jayes, Louise Page and Jean Schofield
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Sheffield, UK

Background

• The National Audit of Dementia (2011) highlighted the need for hospitals to involve carers in providing personal information to enable better care for patients.

• The report found that less than 25% of hospitals collected information about factors that caused the person with dementia distress and what support could help to calm them.

• Approximately 21% of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust’s (STH) bed occupancy is made up of people with dementia and/or confusion (Prevalence Survey undertaken for the STH Dementia Care Group 2011)

• At the same time the report was published a group of multi-disciplinary staff formed to look at improving nutritional care for patients with dementia. In response to the report’s recommendations the group widened its remit to include the care needs of the person living with dementia.

Pilot and Evaluation

• Prior to the pilot, the booklet was reviewed by the:
  - STH Dementia Care Group for applicability and need
  - Sheffield branch of the Alzheimer’s Society and their users. Both carers and people living with dementia offered some positive suggestions and support
  - “It is quite clear and easy to use”
  - “This will improve people’s lives in Sheffield”

• Pilot carried out on four wards - urology, care of the elderly, orthopaedics and acute medicine

• Includes wards that are not specifically dedicated to caring for patients with dementia

• Staff & carers were asked for their views on the content of the booklet and its affects on the care of the patient whilst in hospital

• Analysis of findings underway

• Final steps:
  - Analysis of patient benefit
  - Revise the booklet in light of findings
  - Introduce across the Trust
  - Incorporate into Trust’s Dementia Training Strategy

What did we do?

• The group were inspired by the informative booklet produced by the Alzheimer’s Society called "This is Me" but decided that it did not fully meet the acute hospital setting’s needs.

• The group decided to develop a local booklet that would:
  - enable the person with dementia and their family to communicate relevant information to the ward
  - increase patient centred care planning
  - decrease anxiety in both the person with dementia and their families.
  - increase the quality of care which in turn would enhance the experience of the person with dementia and their families
  - enable staff to communicate appropriately with the person with dementia.
  - enable staff to work as effectively and efficiently as possible.
  - encourage the retention of the patient’s sense of self-esteem, confidence and independence.

All About Me Booklet

• The booklet is in a user friendly, four page format

• Divided into four sections - About Me, My Routine, Eating, Drinks

• It requests detailed information around:
  - life story,
  - likes/dislikes,
  - how distress/pain is displayed,
  - communication needs,
  - daily care needs,
  - food preferences and help required,
  - drink preferences and type of drinking vessel used

• It will be filled out by the patient / carer / staff

• Photo of themselves or something that is special to them will be placed on the cover

• Kept at bedside for easy reference by patient, staff and carers/family

• The patient will have ownership of the booklet - take with them on discharge

References

• Age UK, (2010), Still Hungry to be Heard, Age UK
• Alzheimer’s Society, This is Me Leaflet, Alzheimer’s Society
• HQIP, (2011), Report of the National Audit of Dementia Care in General Hospitals 2011, Executive Summary and Recommendations, Royal College of Psychiatrists’ Centre for Quality Improvement

Particular thanks goes to all of the Project Group members who have been invaluable with their input and enthusiasm.