
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Improving goal setting and achieving in geriatric rehabilitation through participatory action research

23rd International Conference on Integrated Care, Antwerp, Flanders, 22-24 May 2023

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Introduction/background summary: In geriatric rehabilitation a means to achieve client centered care is to work collaboratively on setting and achieving goals. This might enhance self-efficacy, motivation, adherence to rehabilitation and goal-specific performance. In this participatory action research (PAR) project, a nursing team investigated for itself how to improve goal setting and achieving.

Who is it for? The actions the nursing team chose and implemented contribute to improved goal setting and achieving and subsequently enhances client centered care.

Who did you involve and engage with? This research project took place in a Learning and Innovation Network (LIN) on a geriatric rehabilitation ward, in which students and nurses work together on quality improvement projects. The team consisted of fifteen vocational trained nurses and healthcare assistants and eight nursing students, a nurse team leader and a lecturer practitioner spending a day per week on educational activities.

What did you do? Facilitated by the lecturer practitioner, the nursing team (both staff and students) conducted a participatory action research project: they reflected on the steps they could take to work collaboratively on improving their practice, constantly evaluating their experiences. Data collected during the participatory action research consisted of, amongst others: student's notes on patient interviews and interviews with nurses of the team, fieldnotes made by the facilitator during the PAR process. During PAR there is a constant need to feedback information and clarify issues. Therefore data analysis in PAR is partly performed concurrently. Data which had been collected by the facilitator or the nurses or students were used as a basis for planning and reflecting in the project group.

Results: The team identified two themes influencing their goal setting and goal achieving with patients. Firstly, continuity of care is sub-optimal; in their opinion all should work on the same goals. Secondly, patients could be better informed about their rehabilitation path. The team chose to work on better preparation of the multidisciplinary care plan meeting with the patient and at the same time updating the patient record to advance continuity of care. A sound evaluation of the rehabilitation process and preparing the multidisciplinary care plan meeting to attain this, is now part of a shared team practice. During their process the team discovered certain barriers to optimally prepare the multidisciplinary care plan meeting, e.g. to optimally evaluate progress on rehabilitation goals the initial plan needs to be complete; certain barriers hamper preparation with the patient, like cognitive abilities or language problems. New actions have been chosen and are being worked on.

Learning for the international audience: PAR which involves nurses can be seen as advantageous for facilitating change and improving services. Time and setting for reflection and collective learning supports the nursing team to diagnose their current practice and to improve their practice.

Next steps: The Learning and Innovation Network was a temporary agreement between the nursing home and the nursing college based on research funding. Because of the positive results on team culture of improvement the Learning and Innovation Network might become a permanent facility.