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Title: Psychiatric nurses' knowledge, practice and attitudes towards the application of physical restraint in acute admission wards of one psychiatric hospital in Hong Kong

Abstract

Physical restraints have been most commonly used in psychiatric care settings to ensure safety and manage violence for years. However, the use of physical restraints has become more controversial as there has been a greater emphasis on the right of patients and need for safer and ethical nursing interventions (Paisey, Whitney & Moore, 1989). Reports also revealed that inappropriate use of physical restraint can lead to physiological and psychological ill effects such as decrease mobility and resistance response (Strumpf & Evans, 1988).

The main objectives of this quantitative research study were to explore the knowledge, practice and attitudes of psychiatric nurses towards the use of physical restraints and to examine their relationship with the demographic characteristics. Total population was used as the sampling method as the sample size was small. The sample subjects included all qualified psychiatric nurses working in four acute admission wards of a psychiatric hospital in Hong Kong. The main reason for conducting the study in the acute admission wards was that inappropriate use of physical restraints would affect the initial image and cause extra negative physical and psychological effects such as muscle weakness, skin breakdown, anger and resistance to treatment to the newly admitted acute patients (Strumpf & Evans, 1988). The modified questionnaire "Questionnaire for Physical Restraints" was used as the research tool and it was originally developed by Janelli and her colleagues in 1991. It composed of two sections and was designed to explore information about the demographic and professional characteristics, knowledge, practice and attitudes of nurses towards the application of physical restraints.

The collected research results were finally be coded for computer analysis with the aid of " Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)" and analyzed by using the descriptive statistics such as means, frequency distribution and standard deviation. The findings revealed that the respondents had just satisfactory knowledge level, good therapeutic practice and slightly favorable attitudes to use physical restraint. Nurses with

higher rank or longer years of clinical experience acquired better knowledge and practice scores. Recommendations were made according to the research findings and data based information was provided for future hospital policy making, resource allocation and nursing education in order to promote better quality care of physical restraints.