



# ACTIVITY CART USE WITH OLDER ADULTS IN THE INPATIENT SETTING

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# SIGNIFICANCE AND BACKGROUND

- Older adults, including dementia sufferers, are vulnerable to sensory deprivation (SD).
- SD often results in:
  - significant health risks
  - safety issues
  - medical complications
- Healthcare providers underestimate the impact of SD on older patients.
- Awareness of the impacts of SD on health and safety measures are a priority for improving geriatric outcomes.
- NICHE guidelines recommend activity cart stimulation for older adults throughout the healthcare continuum.
  - Guidelines are poorly adopted in acute care settings.

## PURPOSE



The purpose of this quality improvement project was to explore nurses' perceptions and comfort with identifying SD and current activity cart protocols with older adult inpatients.

# CURRENT ACTIVITY CART PROCEDURE

## Activity Kit Contents

- Playing Cards
- Baseball & Basketball Cards
- Board Games & Dominoes
- Crossword/ Word Search/ Sudoku/ Jigsaw Puzzles
- Book
- Activity mats & aprons, socks, wash cloths, pipe cleaners, water bracelets
- Trivia
- Hearing Amplifier & Magnifying Glass
- Adult Coloring Book & Crayons
- Arts and Crafts
- Doll & Purse with accessories
- Sensory/ Stress relief ball
- Portable CD Players



## Handout Attached to Each Activity Cart

- Materials in the activity cart are used to provide therapeutic & diversional activities.
- Refer to attached listing for suggested use.
- Assess for safety prior to giving materials to patients.
- All materials are single patient use.
- Ethnic & cultural differences may be important in selecting materials and activities.
- For program safety and quality, can only use items & materials from activity cart.

# METHODS

- 310-bed tertiary care facility located in Southeastern Virginia
- 7 acute care units
- Nursing staff (n=71) caring for older adults with dementia on inpatient units
- 10-item investigator developed survey
- Staff described comfort level, needs and recommendations associated with the current activity cart protocol.
- Measures enacted to improve nursing readiness and competency in sensory stimulation education

# RESULTS

- 42% perceived that >50% of inpatients were confused (see figure 1).
- 27% of had never used activity cart
  - despite initial training and availability
- >10% reported lack of comfort with correctly selecting and implementing activities
- Nurses' anecdotes highlighted a lack of knowledge in:
  - Selecting appropriate patients for activity cart interventions
  - Quantifying benefits of various activities in older adults with dementia

# SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Question	Responses
What ages are the items in the activity carts used for?	<u>18+</u> >1% <u>any</u> 53% <u>geriatric</u> 11% <u>55+</u> 5% <u>60-65+</u> 8% <u>70-75+</u> 28%
What % of the patients you care for are confused?	<u>0-15</u> 7% <u>15-30</u> 18% <u>30-50</u> 33% <u>50-75</u> 31% <u>75-100</u> 11
Do you know where the activity cart is located?	<u>Yes</u> 91% <u>No</u> 9%
Have you used it?	<u>Yes</u> 73% <u>No</u> 27%
If yes, what was your experience with it?	Better allocation of time Limited medication and restraint use Brought joy to patient Improved family response

Survey Question	Responses
	How to choose activity
What would you like to learn about the activity cart?	How to keep patient interested in activity Inform how each activity benefits the patient How each item works
Do you know how to properly select items from the activity cart	<u>Yes</u> 86% <u>No</u> 14%
If no, please explain	Unsure on how to assess for safety, activity, benefit. Want Research behind activity.
Are you comfortable with the use of the items in the activity cart?	<u>Yes</u> 89% <u>No</u> 11%
Suggestions for improvement	Staffing to implement, Education on how to choose activity, Information on when to try a new activity, Replaced items frequently, Reminders for use

# CONCLUSION

Findings assist CNSs to develop education & mentoring programs

Better elucidating the value of the intervention

Bridging the gap in knowledge related to activity cart use on inpatient units

Reducing SD & improving outcomes for older adults.

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