Background/Aims: Delirium, a frequent complication of hospital admission, often remains undiagnosed. This may be related to a lack of staff knowledge about predisposing factors and other predictors of delirium. Education has improved staff knowledge and recognition of delirium; however, most of those studies have only assessed nurses’ knowledge. This study aimed to measure delirium knowledge across members of a multi-disciplinary team working in two wards of The Townsville Hospital, where there is a high prevalence of patients with delirium, using a pre and post educational intervention. Methods: A pre-/post-survey design was used. All doctors, nurses and allied health staff who worked in the two units were asked to complete a paper questionnaire before and after the multifaceted educational intervention. Results: One hundred and fifty-one staff completed questionnaires. Of the 39 staff who completed questionnaires both pre- and post- the education, there were statistically significant improvements in their total overall knowledge about dementia post-education (M=21.31, SD=2.58) compared to pre-education (M=17.75, SD=4.83), t(36)=−5.96, p<0.001. The mean increase in knowledge scores was 3.56 (95% confidence interval 2.34−4.77). The eta squared statistic (0.50) indicated a large effect size. There were also statistically significant improvements on knowledge and risk factor sub-scales, and fewer uncertain responses given following the education. Conclusion: The educational intervention improved overall knowledge of delirium among a multidisciplinary team. Not all respondents completed both pre and post surveys. A similar study is underway with a more structured educational intervention for nurses working in another health service.

Robotic seals as therapeutic tools in an aged care facility: an exploratory study

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Background/Aims: A significant component of the health care regime for residents of aged care facilities is diversional therapy. Robots, including robotic seals, have been used as an alternative to therapies such as pet therapy in the promotion of health and social well-being of older people in aged care facilities. There is limited available research that evaluates the effectiveness of such therapies in these settings. This study aimed to identify, explore and describe the impact of the use of Paro robotic seals in an aged care facility by diversional therapists who employed these therapeutic tools in their work with the elderly. Methods: A qualitative descriptive, exploratory design was employed in this study, set in an aged care facility in a regional Australian city over a four-month period. Interviews were conducted with three diversional therapists who maintained logs of their interactions with the Paro and residents. Data were transcribed and thematically analysed. Results: The findings of this study present an overview of the impact of Paro robotic seals on residents from the perspective of the diversional therapists. Three major themes were identified; ‘a therapeutic tool that’s not for everybody’; ‘every interaction is powerful’ and ‘keeping the momentum’. Conclusions: Paro is a therapeutic tool that can aid in the promotion of the wellbeing of elderly citizens. Findings reveal improvement in emotional state, reduction of challenging behaviours and improvement in social interactions of residents. The potential benefits justify the investment in Paro, with clear evidence that these tools can have a positive impact that warrants further exploration.