Effects of Art from the Heart on Nurse Satisfaction and Patient Well-Being

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Effects of Art from the Heart on Nurse Satisfaction and Patient Well-being

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INTRODUCTION
High patient to nurse ratios lead to decreased job satisfaction and increased burnout, which affects quality of care.¹ Burnout is a significant problem in the nursing community, which is up to four times greater than average for all US workers.¹ Nursing social competency is necessary for listening, empathy, making time for patients, behavior and attitudes.²

Art programming has been shown to positively affect unit culture, quality of care and nursing practice.³ It increases well-being, reduces stress, and enhances nurse-patient communication by promoting social relationships. It also improves patient compliance with recommended treatments.³

Art from the Heart (AFTH) is a collaboration between Burlington City Arts (BCA), UVM Medical Center (UVMMC) and volunteers, which provides art supplies, visual art, and patient “About Me” pages to patients, families and employees.

The objective of this study is to assess the efficacy of AFTH through exploring nursing staff perceptions, understanding and attitudes towards the program.

METHODS

- 28 interviews of nursing staff perspectives were conducted on Baird 4, an adult inpatient ward, at UVM Medical Center.
- A 19 question survey using Likert scales and short answer formats was administered via structured interviews. Questions assessed perceptions of the utility of art on patient anxiety and pain, effects on communication, as well as job satisfaction and burnout.
- The surveys were analyzed to extract major and minor themes.

RESULTS

Art From the Heart improves patient well-being and nurse satisfaction

- “Sometimes it’s a way to connect with a patient and it’s not there you miss that opportunity”
- “Sometimes it’s a way to connect with a patient and it’s not there you miss that opportunity”
- “It brightens up the rooms and makes patients happy... and if patients are happy everybody’s happy”
- “It was able to draw them in to the corner and talk to them...it makes people feel comfortable when they are here”
- “It provides the opportunity for patients to talk about their stress”
- “It gives them somebody to talk to, if you are having a hard time”
- “It definitely helps people cut out work...and I think it makes it a lot easier on us because we have a lot of things to be doing...”

Nurse Satisfaction

- Provides Connection & Promotes Conversation
- Positive Influence on Unit
- Provides Comfort & Happiness
- Improves Productivity
- Distraction for Patients

Patient Well-being

- Provides Dementia Patients
- Benefits Dementia Patients

Figures 1 and 2: Baird 4 nursing staff overwhelmingly reported that AFTH helps with initiating patient conversation, seeing patients as individuals, removing stress from providers and improving the sense of community among co-workers.

DISCUSSION

Burnout is a problem that significantly impacts the nursing community.¹ AFTH evoked several major positive themes related to nurse satisfaction. It was reported by nursing staff to enhance relationships with patients, create community among coworkers and decrease stress. This is consistent with prior research performed with art programming.³ AFTH’s positive effects on nurses likely reduces burnout and improves retention.

The second major theme was AFTH’s effect on patient wellbeing. Patient attitudes towards nurses were strongly improved by AFTH in 17 out of 27 cases, which is congruent with prior research showing art programming’s positive impact on patient stress and nurse-patient communication.³

CONCLUSION

AFTH provides positive benefits on Baird 4 by:

- Reducing nursing staff stress and perceived patient anxiety
- Improving communication, perceived patient mood and health.
- Creating a sense of community, possibly reducing rates of burnout.

Limitations: Our study included a small sample size with a high turnover rate on the unit, as well as a lack of knowledge or accessibility to the program.

SUGGESTIONS

- AFTH should be included in new Baird 4 staff orientation
- Art kits should be provided at the nursing station
- A contact sheet at the nurse’s station of who to contact and where to find additional supplies
- This program should also be expanded to other adult in-patient floors.

REFERENCES