Nurses’ Knowledge and Practices regarding Enteral Nutrition at the Critical Care Department of Al-Manial University Hospital in Egypt: Impact of a Designed Instructional Program

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Abstract

Patients in the critical care setting are at high risk of malnutrition due to the nature of their illness, stressors and their hyper-metabolic state. Enteral nutrition is the preferred route of nutrient administration in critically ill patient. Compared with total parenteral nutrition; the enteral route is safer, more physiologic and less expensive. As the nursing role in tube insertion, enteral feeding delivery and care is crucial, the nurses’ knowledge and practice regarding enteral nutrition will affect the patient clinical outcomes. The aim of this study was to examine the impact of a designed instructional program on the nurses’ knowledge and practices regarding enteral nutrition in the critical care department of Al-Manial University Hospital. A quasi-experimental (time series) design was used in the current study. A convenient sample of 85 nurses representing approximately all practitioner nurses at the critical care department at Al-Manial University Hospital. Data were obtained through three main tools; knowledge assessment questionnaire with the socio-demographic data sheet, observational checklist and session evaluation form. The instructional program was designed based on an extensive revision of the related materials, recent medical textbooks, studies and literature. Method; The instructional program was conducted over 21 repeated lectures during different working shifts in an average of 6 sessions per week for one month, 90 minutes each.; lectures included watching some educational videos for the practical skills related to enteral nutrition. Results revealed that the designed instructional program was having an effective, sustainable impact on improving nurses’ knowledge and practice regarding enteral nutrition in the critical care department. The study concluded that nurses had lack of knowledge and some unsafe practices regarding enteral feeding in the critical care department, however, the instructional program showed a positive impact in improving nurses’ knowledge and practice regarding enteral nutrition in the critical care department. The study recommended establishing a written updated protocol of enteral nutrition to ensure enough knowledge, unified and safe nursing practice; it’s recommended to implement this study on other hospitals in Cairo and Egypt. Moreover, the implementation of continuous education programs regarding enteral nutrition can play a part in supporting clinical practice.

Key words: Designed Instructional Program, Nurses’ Knowledge, Nurses’ Practice, Enteral Nutrition (EN).