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A nurse case management tool for older patients with inflammatory bowel disease

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to highlight an Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Nurse Case Management Tool that may be useful in managing IBD for older patients. The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool includes the components of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool emphasizes the importance of including patient education, emotional support, referral activation and multidisciplinary collaboration in the plan of care. The utilization of this tool by nurses may lead to better patient outcomes and decreased health care costs.

Keywords: Nurse case management; Inflammatory bowel disease; Older patients; Inflammatory bowel disease nurse case management tool

1. Introduction

There is an increase in the amount of cases of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) among older adults [1]. IBD comprises of Crohn's Disease (CD) and Ulcerative Colitis (UC). With Crohn's Disease, inflammation can occur in any part of the gastrointestinal tract, whereas with ulcerative colitis, the inflammation is usually located in the colon [2]. There is a body of research indicating that the management of IBD is challenging for older adults due to co-morbidities, medication non-adherence, treatment side effects, lack of social support, lack of regular utilization of a health care provider, and lack of patient education [3,4]. Health care providers play an important role in assuring that IBD patients are receiving the care that they need to manage their IBD. Management of IBD often requires a multidisciplinary team approach to manage this disease effectively. The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool discussed in this paper may lead nurses and patients in the right direction in managing IBD more optimally.

2. The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool

The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool was developed by the author and was based upon the principles of nursing case management and the nursing process, which includes assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool addresses the following phases: assessment of IBD symptoms, planning for each IBD problem, implementation strategies for each problem identified, and evaluation of outcomes. (See Figure 1). Assessment questions pertain to assessing for medications, managing IBD symptoms, assessing for mental health issues, evaluating for social support systems, assessing for nutritional deficits, and exploring health care utilization patterns. Planning for each IBD problem includes mutual goal setting and planning with the patient, family, and health care professionals. Referral activation is also embedded in the planning phase of the model. Implementation strategies for each problem

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identified may include teaching, emotional support, and the review of a referral activation. For the evaluation component, each outcome is monitored over a period of time and then re-evaluated.

The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool was distributed to two gastroenterology physicians, two gastroenterology nurse practitioners, and one nurse for their feedback regarding the content in the tool. The feedback was noted and the tool was revised accordingly. Test-retest reliability for the IBD Nurse Case Management Tool has not been established, but it does have face validity because the questions are relevant in gauging information about how patients are managing their IBD.

3. Implications: Utilizing the IBD Nurse Case Management Tool

The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool may be utilized by nurses in inpatient and outpatient health care settings. The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool is intended to be utilized over a period of time to monitor the plan of care for older IBD patients. Regular provider encounters with older adults with IBD are essential as medication compliance, treatment side effects, disease activity, and patient education must be monitored continuously in order to avoid poor patient outcomes [4]. For many older patients with IBD, managing their plan of care may be overwhelming and they may need extra support from nurses to help them self-manage their disease. Maintaining contact with these patients whether it is making phone calls or utilizing telehealth technologies should be made a priority in health care settings. One study examined the impact of a web based telemanagement system for improving quality of life for IBD patients. The results from the study indicated improvement in quality of life, patient satisfaction, and social activities when a web based telemanagement system was utilized [5].

Utilizing the proposed IBD Nurse Case Management Tool when making phone calls or when using telehealth technologies with older adults with IBD may reinforce best practices in the management of IBD. The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool, allows for the nurse to do the following: assess the problems presented by the patient, set goals mutually with the patient, plan for interventions, implement interventions, and evaluate outcomes on an ongoing basis as this is a comprehensive process. The IBD Nurse Case Management Tool highlights specifically the impact of assessing for the mental health needs and for the psychosocial needs of older adults with IBD. One study examined the importance of integrating psychological interventions in the care regimen for IBD patients. These psychological interventions were found to reduce health care costs, specifically costs associated with emergency department visits [6]. The IBD Nurse Case Management Model Tool also includes a strong emphasis on multidisciplinary involvement in planning for the care of the older IBD population as this is an essential component from a provider and patient perspective [7]. In the implementation phase of the IBD Nurse Case Management Tool, providing education, offering emotional support, and activating referrals are key pillars to a successful plan of care for older IBD patients.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of utilizing the IBD Nurse Case Management Tool is to have a nurse assess, plan, implement, and evaluate a plan of care for the older IBD patient over a period of time. This nurse led case management approach may potentially help address the gaps in care that may be present across care settings for older adults with IBD. Utilizing the IBD Nurse Case Management Tool may prove to be useful specifically when care is interrupted due to a pandemic or other unforeseen circumstances. The ultimate goal for utilizing the IBD Nurse Case Management Tool is to possibly improve overall patient outcomes and to decrease health care costs.

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Supplementary information

Figure 1 Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Nurse Case Management Tool

Assessment

- Are you having trouble managing your IBD symptoms:
 - Yes or No
 - If yes, please explain.
- Are you having trouble managing your stress levels:
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please explain.
- Are you having any issues with your current IBD medications/transfusions:
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please explain.
- Are you having trouble maintaining your weight or managing your diet:
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please explain.
- Are you depressed or anxious:
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please explain.
- Do you have an adequate support system to help you in managing your IBD:
 - Yes
 - No
 - If no, please explain.
- Do you feel isolated from friends and family:
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please explain.
- Have you visited the ED in the last two months:
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please explain.
- Have you contacted or visited your physician in the last month:
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please explain.
- Are you having difficulties scheduling IBD related medical appointments:
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please explain.

Planning for each problem identified in the assessment

- Mutual Goal Setting
 - Yes
 - No
 - Please specify:
- Planning with the patient
 - Yes
 - No
 - Please specify:
- Planning with the family
 - Yes
 - No
 - Please specify:
- Planning with the health care team
 - Yes
 - No
 - Please specify:

Referral Activation (Check all that apply for the patient)

- Crohn's and Colitis Foundation for educational resources
- Dietician for IBD related issues
- Gastroenterologist/NP for follow up care
- Social Worker for IBD related issues
- Psychiatrist/Psychologist for mental health issues
- IBD Infusion coordinator
- Pain Management for IBD related issues
- Pharmacist for IBD related issues
- Wellness/Relaxation activities
- Other:

Implementation for each problem identified in the assessment section

- Provide Teaching:
 - Yes or No, please specify.
- Provide Emotional Support
 - Yes or No, please specify
- Activate /review team member referrals
 - Yes or No, please specify

Evaluation for each problem identified in the assessment section

- Problem identified and outcome documented:
 - Is the problem ongoing? Yes or No, please explain
 - Is the problem resolved? Yes or No, please explain
 - Is re-evaluation of the problem needed?