

Stroke & The Importance of Early Screening for Post-Stroke Depression

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Problem and Needs Assessment

- ❖ Stroke is the 5th leading cause of death in the United States [1]
- ❖ There are about 795,000 people in the United States that have a stroke each year [1]
- ❖ Stroke affects lives in many ways, but there is one effect that not many think about after a stroke event occurs
- ❖ A common sequelae of stroke is depression. Depression is prevalent in approximately 30% of all strokes [3]
- ❖ Untreated depression leads to increased morbidity and mortality in stroke patients [3].
- ❖ The Joint Commission acknowledges that depression needs to be treated, but gives no set guidelines on treatment
- ❖ There are depression screening tools available to help recognize and treat post-stroke depression (PSD)

Objectives

- ❖ Establish that post-stroke depression (PSD) is often not recognized, diagnosed, and treated consistently [3]
- ❖ Identify screening tools that will help capture signs and symptoms of depression in acute stroke patients
- ❖ Once depression has been identified, does medication therapy versus cognitive therapy need warranted? Or do both need to occur at once then slowly taper each/both away?

Theoretical Framework

Ida Jean Orlando's Deliberative Nursing Process

- This theory identifies that all patient behavior can be a cry for help, both verbal and non-verbal, and it is up to the nurse to interpret the behavior and determine the needs of the patient [4]
- ❖ Symptoms of depression can be missed if the patient is unable to speak for themselves, or if they don't want to express their symptoms
- ❖ Healthcare professionals must also look at body language and engagement in daily life activities to see behaviors that may indicate depression

If there is concern for depression, a screening tool can help capture depression so interventions can be implemented.



- ❖ The most common screening tool to assist in detecting and recognizing depression in the stroke population is the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ).
- ❖ The PHQ consists of a Likert type scale for patients that is commonly used for screening and diagnosis, as well as selecting and monitoring treatment [6]
- ❖ The American Psychological Association mentions this tool is of sound validity with Cronbach alphas of 0.86 and above in studies [6]
- ❖ PHQ is used in primary care settings, as well as with older individuals and with those who have physically disabling conditions. It is free and available in English and over 30 other languages [6]

Results & Outcomes

- ❖ Post-stroke depression is common in approximately 30% of all stroke patients
- ❖ There is no set tool to diagnose PSD alone, but the PHQ-2 & PHQ-9 are the most popular screening tools
- ❖ After implementing a depression screening protocol, patients were noted to participate better in their activities and recovery process [5]
- ❖ Morbidity and mortality in stroke patients decreases when depression is recognized and treated [1]

PHQ-9 Score	Provisional Diagnosis	Treatment Recommendation
5-9	Minimal Symptoms	Support, educate to call if worse, return in one month <i>Patient Preferences should be considered</i>
10-14	Minor depression Dysthymia Major Depression, mild	Support, watchful waiting Antidepressant or psychotherapy Antidepressant or psychotherapy
15-19	Major depression, moderately severe	Antidepressant or psychotherapy
>20	Major Depression, severe	Antidepressant and psychotherapy (especially if not improved on monotherapy)

(example of interventions that can guide treatment based on PHQ score)

Recommendations for Practice

- ❖ Once a screening tool is adopted into practice, educate staff (nurses and MD/NP/PA's) involved in care of stroke patients so there is adequate time to learn and answer questions of uncertainty
- ❖ Stroke core team member collects data and disseminates to core team in real time so as to improve process in real time
- ❖ Discharge phone calls can be part of patient satisfaction survey and bridge gap in any missed information during stay and discharge process
- ❖ Stroke support groups can be available to not only patients, but their care-givers to help alleviate concerns regarding post-stroke depression and recovery

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