IMPROVING STAFF AWARENESS ON ELDERLY PATIENTS' SENSORY NEEDS ON GERIATRIC WARD.

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INTRODUCTION

A study published in 2022 show patients with delirium had a higher prevalence of hearing impairment, visual impairment and bi-sensory impairment compared with those without delirium.(1) However, these issues are often overlooked during hospital admissions. Without access to sensory aids like glasses or hearing aids, patients may experience, disorientation, reduced autonomy, difficulties engaging with healthcare professionals, negative impact on recovery and both patients and their next of kin's hospital experience. (2)

OBJECTIVE

- To gauge current documentation and staff awareness of sensory impairments and aids
- To assess effectiveness of posters and adding symbols to handover sheets in increasing staff awareness and documentation
- To survey if staff notice improved quality of patient interaction / consultation after this

SYMBOLS USED

No / Poor Vision | Hearing Aids | No / Poor Hearing | Visual Aids

METHOD – PDSA CYCLE

Baseline data collection (Weeks 1-2): Documentation of sensory impairments and aids on bedside sheets, staff handover sheets checked and interviews with staff. Pre-intervention questionnaire circulated.

1 **Intervention 1 (Week 3)**: Staff were reminded during morning board rounds to check for sensory impairments and aids and document.

Post-intervention data collection (Weeks 4-5): Repeat staff interviews, check documentation

2 **Intervention 2 (Week 6)**: Posters were displayed in staff areas to encourage awareness and documentation.

Post-intervention data collection (Weeks 7-8): interviews of staff, and documentation checks

3 **Intervention 3 (Week 9)**: Symbols representing sensory impairments and aids added on staff handover sheets. Posters explaining the symbols were also displayed.

Final data collection (Weeks 10-12): Repeat interviews, assess documentation and post-intervention questionnaire circulated.

RESULTS

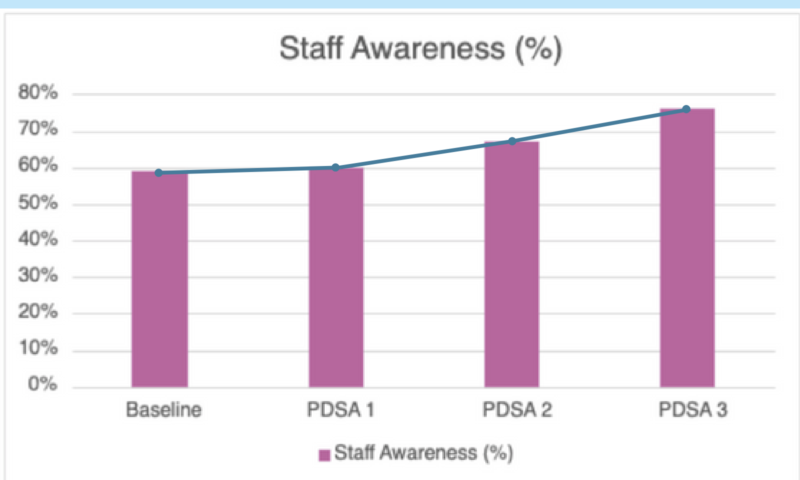
Average occupancy of 22 patients out of which 53% of patients used sensory aids:

49% using glasses

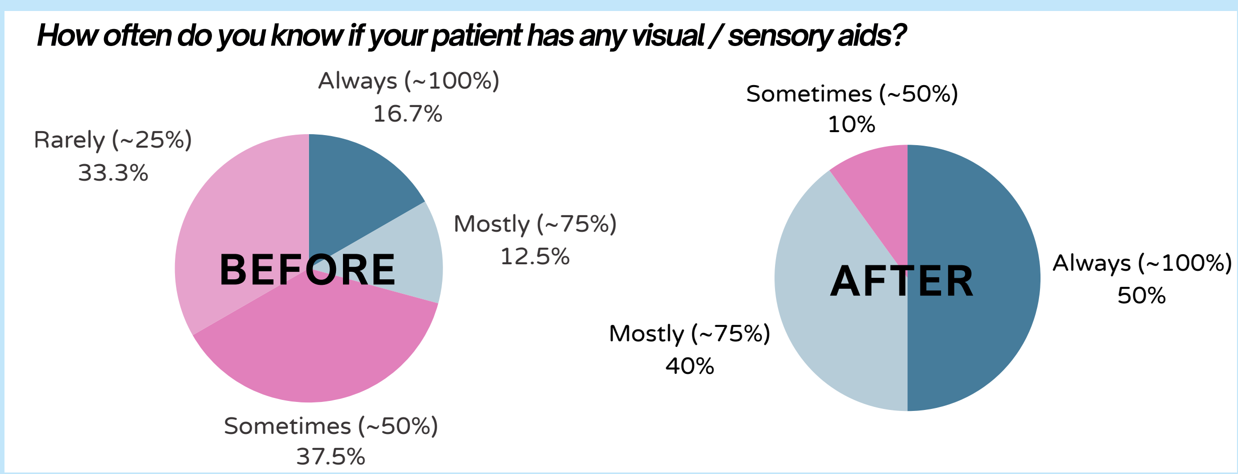
9% using hearing aids

Baseline data revealed no record of aids / impairments on handover sheets and only 54% of bedside sheets were completed accurately.

Across three PDSA cycles, steady improvements were achieved. By PDSA 3, bedside documentation improved by 30%, and staff awareness increased by 17% from baseline.



Pre-intervention questionnaires were completed by 24 staff members and post-intervention by 20, with 72% participating in both. Most respondents (86%) had experience working with patients with dual sensory impairments, and all had worked with at least one.



Staff knowledge of patients' sensory needs improved markedly—from a third reporting rarely being aware pre-intervention to 90% knowing this information most or all of the time post-intervention.

All respondents found the sensory symbols useful, with 67% rating them as very useful. 100% Awareness of patients' sensory aids increased from 16.7% to 50% following symbol introduction.

100% staff noted improved quality of patient interactions. 100%

CONCLUSION

After three PDSA cycles, the implementation of posters and the introduction of symbols denoting visual and hearing impairments and aids have significantly improved staff awareness. This, in turn, has enhanced the quality of staff interactions with patients. Future PDSA cycles should explore patient perspectives using anonymous surveys to assess the direct impact on their hospital experience, as well as examine whether this initiative reduces distress and the incidence of delirium on the ward. Furthermore, accessibility to sensory aids needs to be assessed. There are currently plans to trial these measures in other wards for elderly patients.

(1) Morandi A, Insitari M, Udina C, Gual N, Mota M, Tassistro E, Andreano A, Cherubini A, Gentile S, Mossello E, Marengoni A, Olivé A, Riba F, Ruis D, de Jaime E, Bellelli G; Italian Study Group of Delirium. Visual and Hearing Impairment Are Associated With Delirium in Hospitalised Patients: Results of a Multisite Prevalence Study. J Am Med Dir Assoc. 2021 Jun;22(6):1162-1167.e3. doi: 10.1016/j.jamda.2020.09.032. Epub 2020 Nov 4. PMID: 33160873.

(2) Johansson, Y.A., Bergh, I., Ericsson, I. et al. Delirium in older hospitalized patients—signs and actions: a retrospective patient record review. BMC Geriatr 18, 43 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-018-0731-5