



Original Contribution

DERMATOLOGY EDUCATION IN GERONTOLOGICAL CARE NURSING

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ABSTRACT:

This education is part of International Bulgarian- German project. The purpose is to integrate Curriculum Objectives for Geriatric Dermatology and Gerontology Medical and Social Curriculum to aim at starting new nursing specialization and practice by significantly expanding the existing graduate program in gerontological nursing. The mission is to create a new model for care gerontologic/complementary nursing for the senior citizens living in subsidized housing. This advanced practice nurse will be educated in a blended role and will be prepared to sit for the geriatric nurse practitioner certification, and the gerontological clinical nurse specialist certification.

Key words: dermatology, education, care nursing, gerontology

INTRODUCTION

Gerontological care nursing is a new subject for Bulgaria. The need for this health professional is evident when looking at the cohort of aging baby boomers who will number 65.6 million this millennium. The Population in Bulgaria and in the area of Stara Zagora is in a in a period of "demographic aging", i.e. more than 12 % are over a 60.

The older persons live in the community, with a family member or living alone. Older individuals account for one third of all hospital stays and almost half of all hospital days (1). These aging health care consumers need daily complementary care and treatment. Descriptive studies and controlled clinical trials on the effects of interdisciplinary outpatient geriatric assessment and care programs show improved outcomes (2).

The education was realized in the Medical College in Trakia University, Stara Zagora and Social senior houses in Stara Zagora and Kazanlak. The purpose of this international Bulgarian-German project is to enhance nursing education and practice by significantly expanding the existing graduate program in gerontological nursing to create a new model for advanced practice and primary care in gerontologic/complementary care nursing in Bulgaria (3,4).

Survey studies have demonstrated that skin diseases are more common in the geriatric population than in the general population. Patients older than 74 are even more likely to develop significant skin diseases (5). As people grow older, they see certain changes in the skin, which is the body's largest and most visible organ. The skin becomes drier, more wrinkled, and spots and growths appear. Also, after an injury the skin tends to heal more slowly. Some of these skin changes are natural, unavoidable, and harmless. Others are itchy or painful, and some changes, such as skin cancer, are serious and require medical attention. Many of these skin problems can be prevented. Whether a danger to health or merely cosmetically unattractive, most of these skin problems can be addressed by care and therapies now available.

In view of these facts, our objectives which reflect the project goals will be to:

- 1) Improve access to quality health dermatology care by designing, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive curriculum to prepare nurses for the gerontologic and complementary care of aging adults;
- 2) Improve access to a diverse and culturally competent work by educating at least 22 qualified nurses in senior houses from Stara Zagora and Kazanlak for the gerontologic/complementary care speciality;
- 3) Improve the cultural competence and sensitivity of the dermatology care in gerontologic/complementary nursing.

The dermatology training as part of interdisciplinary education, realized by

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gerontologists, psychologists, neurologists, psychiatrists, physiotherapists and social workers was included in the following general topics (6):

- Models of Aging- Aging and skin- Physiology and Pathology-4 hours
- Accompanying and/or treatment – Environment and skin- Perception, Skin care in Old Age.

Learning Objectives

Objective 1. Understand the biology and physiology of aging skin including the impact of gender and ethnic variability

Objective 2. Understand the psychosocial aspects of aging across ethnic and different social groups

Objective 3. Understand the financing and systems of health care available to older persons

Objective 4. Identify basic principles of geriatric dermatology, including unique aspects of disease presentation, and geriatric pharmacology

Objective 5. Describe the role of geriatric assessment, health promotion, palliative care, and rehabilitation in patient management

Objective 6. Understand state of the art approaches to geriatric care including care in senior houses, hospital, office practice, nursing home and home care settings

Objective 7. Understand the importance of geriatric skin problems and issues to dermatology.

Objective 8. Understand the diagnosis and management of geriatric skin syndromes, including age-related changes in the skin table1.

Table1. Training program – Dermatology education for gerontological care nursing

ATROPHY Purpura senilis Angiokeratomas	IMMUNOLOGICALLY MEDIATED DISEASE Pemphigoid Pemphigus: vulgaris, foliaceus
PHYSICAL FACTORS Seborrheic dermatitis, Rosacea Stasis dermatitis; actinic dermatitis Solar elastosis, Solar atrophy Solar lentigines Perleche	INFESTATIONS Scabies Pediculosis Insecticides
NEOPLASMS: BENIGN Seborrheic keratoses Keratoacanthoma	METABOLICALLY MEDIATED SKIN DISEASE Necrobiosis lipoidica diabetorum Trophic ulcer; atherosclerotic ulcer
NEOPLASIA: PREMALIGNANT AND ALIGNANT Solar keratosis, Actinic cheilitis Spinocellular carcinoma Nodular basal cell carcinoma Melanoma	INFECTIONS Candidiasis Dermatophytosis Erysipelas Herpes zoster; Herpes zoster frontalis

CONCLUSIONS

The current climate of social care setting for the institutionalized elderly is changed. Social, economical and psychological support are very important for development of a different form of gerontological care and new education. In the near future, the growing market for long-term insurance is likely to stimulate the demand for gerontological care nurse specialist. Given the high incidence of significant dermatologic diseases in the elderly, it is clear that all health care providers need to familiarize themselves with the diagnosis, prevention care and treatment of skin problems in this population.

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