

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
James Madison University School of Nursing
Omega Zeta
2020 Abstract

The Use of Life-Like, Robotic Animals in the Acute Care Setting to Assist in the Care of Patients with Dementia

Background:

Hospitalized patients with dementia can become agitated, refuse care, require restraints or antipsychotic medications to manage agitation. Literature supports use of animal assisted therapy (AAT) and robotic seals to decrease agitation for patients with dementia in long-term care (LTC); there is a gap in literature for the use of AAT and robotic pet therapy in hospitals for this population.

Purpose:

Investigate use of robotic cats/dogs to decrease agitation, antipsychotic medication, restraints and improve staff ability to care for hospitalized dementia patients.

Methods/Interventions:

Patients on three hospital units who meet inclusion criteria will have their agitation assessed using the Pittsburg Agitation Scale (PAS) prior to receiving the animal and every 6 hours after, up to 24 hours. A retrospective chart review will be completed to assess antipsychotic medications and restraint use pre and post intervention. The clinicians who cared for these patients will be asked to participate in focus groups about their experience providing care to the patients.

Evaluation/Results:

Focus group data will be analyzed using the Chi-Squared statistical test. The antipsychotic medication, restraint use and PAS results will be analyzed using one-way ANOVA statistical test. Results will be reviewed to determine the affect life-like robotic cats and dogs have on hospitalized patients with dementia.

Conclusions/Implications:

Dementia with agitation presents challenges for clinicians in hospitals. In LTC, AAT and robotic seals have been effective decreasing agitation for patients with dementia. There is a lack of evidence for use of robotic pet therapy to decrease agitation of hospitalized dementia patients.