

Psychiatric nursing care for patients with physical complications in Japan: a literature review

Yuki MURASE, Jun SHIMIZU, Satoshi YAMASHITA.

Kyoto Koka Women's University Department of Nursing, Kyoto, Japan
 Email: y-murase@mail.koka.ac.jp: Yuki Murase

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to survey nursing practices related to patients with physical complications, who are increasing in conjunction with the aging of psychiatric inpatients, through a literature review in order to understand the current state of and gain new suggestions for nursing practice.

We searched the document database Ichu-shi Web (Ver. 4) for articles published from 2007 to 2013 using the keywords "physical complications," "nursing," and "original article," and obtained 98 hits. The search excluded research reports, documents, and reviews, and focused on case studies. From the 106 hits, we selected and subjected to analysis 19 articles addressing "support and relationships" with patients with physical complications who were hospitalized in psychiatric hospitals. After organizing support methods for and relationships with these patients from the contents, we extracted five categories.

Our analysis revealed that in order to deal with mental disorders and diversifying physical complications, nursing methods were developed primarily based on teachings from case studies.

With respect to relationships with patients suffering from both mental disorders and various physical disorders, individualized relationships were realized through the following nursing methods: [support for diversifying physical disorders], [respect for self-determination in therapy for physical disorders based on patient characteristics], [multi-faceted assistive support that respects patient wishes and intentions], [strengthening of family function and related considerations], and [multidisciplinary collaboration and consultation]. Moreover, there was an increasing trend of studies suggesting the need for education aimed at improving nursing skills in somatotherapy and improving the ability to sense conditions that differ from normal through careful observation of not only mental symptoms, but also physical symptoms.

Keywords: *nursing care, patients with physical complications, literature review*

Introduction

A patient survey conducted in 2011 by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare revealed that of the estimated 224,000 patients admitted to psychiatric hospitals, those 65 years and older numbered 109,900, or approximately 49% of the total [1]. As these figures show, patients with psychiatric disorders tend to be older individuals, and in psychiatric clinics, physical complications in such patients have become a major issue.

To use schizophrenia as an example, positive symptoms such as hallucinations and delusions represent some primary disorders, while disabilities are among its secondary disorders. Many technical texts and previous studies in psychiatric nursing suggest

that these disorders greatly impact the daily lives of patients. In addition to dealing with features of psychiatric disorders, advanced knowledge and techniques are required to address the associated physical complications. That is, deploying nursing care for psychiatric patients who have difficulty maintaining or improving self-control, while helping them to accept their physical disabilities, is currently fraught with difficulties.

Kiyono et al. (2012) reported that psychiatric nurses feel anxious and troubled when providing nursing care and treatment for physical complications that develop in patients with psychiatric disorders during their hospitalization [2]. This may be attributed to a number of factors, including the following: 1) patient factors, such as the deterioration of psychiatric symptoms due to physical complications and the associated difficulty