

Improving Hand Hygiene Practices of Preschool-Age Children to Reduce the Spread of Infection: A

Lesson for the Childcare Worker

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Annette Callis

ABSTRACT

Joanna Lejnieks, BSN, RN

Little is known about hand hygiene practices of preschool-age children in reducing the spread of infection and the impact of childcare workers on such practices. In this thesis study, the researcher sought to explore childcare worker knowledge and attitudes regarding hand washing, situations requiring hand washing performance, and barriers to hand washing. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from two local child day care facilities and from the Vanguard University Institutional Review Board. The researcher presented participants with an educational session focused on correct hand washing technique and appropriate situations for performance of hand washing. A hands-on activity in simulated germ transmission was conducted to illustrate the impact of ineffective hand washing technique.

Knowledge acquisition of correct hand washing technique was demonstrated in study findings; confounding results were found related to hand washing attitudes and performance. Differences in the total pre ($M = 2.98$, $SD = .51$) and post-test mean scores ($M = 3.04$, $SD = .56$), showed a significant effect for the teaching intervention $t(20) = -.69$, $p < .50$. Participants showed an increase in their comfort level holding peers accountable for their hand washing, and the majority stated a high level of motivation to change their hand washing behavior. The questionnaire item about likelihood of holding a co-worker accountable for handwashing, showed the most variability in responses across settings. This finding suggests varying cultural norms in promoting worker to worker feedback.

Study findings point to the implications for professional practice and potential harm to children that can result from inadequate handwashing practices, similar to what is witnessed with hospital-based healthcare workers. While findings suggest a desire to improve hand washing practice among participants, clearly childcare workers can benefit from ongoing hand washing education.

Emotional Intelligence Development among Caregivers and Patients

Tamara Nunley, BSN, RN, OCN

Thesis Advisor – Dr. Mary Wickman

ABSTRACT

There is insufficient and inconsistent education readily available to oncology patients and their caregivers on how to be aware of, manage, and deal with emotions related to a cancer diagnosis. The lack of sufficient education clearly impacts the quality of the cancer patient and caregiver's relationship. The purpose of this project was to address the need for patients and caregivers to understand and improve their Emotional Intelligence (EI). Becoming more aware of emotions and how to manage them can improve the quality of care imparted to the caregiver's loved one(s). Study aims focused on the effectiveness of educating a group of cancer patients and their caregivers on the concept of EI, specifically the self-management component of EI.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Medical Center and University Institutional Review Boards. An education session was provided to a group of participants (n=15) at an outpatient support group affiliated with the Medical Center. Participants completed researcher generated pre and post-class surveys, open-ended questions, and a post session evaluation. Findings demonstrated increased knowledge in effective communication skills among cancer survivors and caretakers and their satisfaction with the education session.

Two measure of reliability, test- retest reliability and internal consistency, were used in evaluating the reliability of the new self-management EI scale. Reliability analyses were conducted using Pearson correlations for individual items as well as the total scale. Pre and post-test scores for each scale item were strongly correlated, as were the pre and post-test total scale scores, $r(13) = .949, p < .01$. These findings demonstrated EI scale consistency between pre and post-test administration. Internal consistency of the EI self-management scale was demonstrated by a Cronbach's alpha of .81.

This study provided foundational work in helping educate patients and caregivers on how to improve self-management skills, which can ultimately improve the care and disease trajectory of the cancer patient and their caregiver. Future research on the self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management components of EI can be conducted to generate a fully validated EI tool.