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Service Learning for Balance and Activity Promotion in the Older Adult

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Introduction

All students do volunteer work as part of the class and 31% of the participants were randomly selected, lottery style, to students of the MOT and DPT program in a ratio of approximately 1:3.

Sequence of data collection analysis

Falls are a leading concern with the older adult population and students need to be trained in the complex issue of balance in the older adult, both with and without a service learning opportunity.

Method

The question asked, on three different occasions was:

“Yet 2 activities that you might do to improve the balance of your elderly client”

A phenomenological design was approved by the University of St. Augustine IRB. Participants were a convenience sample of 100 fall risk students in three consecutive cohorts. Students were both non-seniors and seniors.

All students do volunteer work as part of the class and 31% of the participants were randomly selected, lottery style, to participate in the movement and music workshops at local assisted living and senior housing complexes.

Analysis and results

This classical content analysis approach produces quantitative and qualitative data.

Student answers were sorted into categories: basic, intermediate, advanced, vague and tests.

Categorization was confirmed with local CDS clinicians.

Reflections

“I had the interval exercise was more impact in my overall learning than only learning the concepts in a classroom”

“I really impressed by the resident’s abilities to follow instructions despite the grunts whenever a difficult move was added and I was able to witness how incorporating elements that are meaningful can really motivate someone to work on exercise without them realizing it”

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“The rest of that session he seemed more engaged and all that was required to evoke this from him was the right kind of music”

“the goal of this study was to explore and compare student ideas and thoughts regarding balance and activity promotion in the older adult, both with and without a service learning opportunity.”

Discussion

Student ability to apply more complex balance interventions improved after the lecture by 55% and an additional 15% after the service learning. The major category increased after the avalanche probability due to the student’s ability to apply both lecture and service learning concepts.

Future research should additionally survey students after a clinical internship to determine their approach to balance and exercise when working with older adult clients, and see if there is a difference between those who attended the service learning workshop compared to the lecture only.

Conclusion

“the experience allowed me to have a complete new view on the geriatric community because it showed me that they want to move and want to be active as long as there are opportunities available to them”

References


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5. 5.    Centers for Disease control and prevention 2014.
