



Media Statement

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Delirium prevention delivers

Royal Perth Hospital nurses on Wards 5A/B now have the tools to prevent delirium in patients faster thanks to the A MAP (Management, Assessment and Prevention) of Delirium Quality Project.

Delirium is an acute and relatively sudden decline in attention-focus, perception, and cognition and is one of the most common acute disorders affecting adults in hospitals

Jointly funded by the Aged Care Policy Directorate of the Health Department and the Quality Unit of RPH the Delirium Project began in 2006 and finished early this year with the outcomes currently being prepared by Project Coordinator Noellene Foster.

Clinical Nurse Specialist on Ward 5A/B Andrea McFaul said the aim of the project was to reduce the risk of delirium by educating nurses on appropriate treatment.

A multi-disciplinary age-friendly approach was introduced in wards 5A and 5B, focusing on prevention, early intervention and management of delirium whilst minimising workload for staff.

The project was divided into four phases consisting of: planning, development and intervention, evaluation and dissemination.

“Nurses were educated on delirium through a power point presentation, and formal guidelines were put in place for staff to follow and recognise.”

“As part of this project patients received a mental test on admission and then were referred for medical treatment if they showed symptoms of delirium,” Andrea said.

This assessment tool and technique pathway was introduced and used by the nurses as a means of assisting the nurses in the detection of those patients who were at risk of or showing signs of confusion, delirium, dementia or depression.

The nurses then documented their findings and used this system to bring it to the attention of doctors who then apply the assessment tools to reach a diagnosis.

Part of the nurses' process involves continual assessment, implementation of prevention strategies and specific care strategies.

This plan also saw the production of patient and carer information as well as pharmacological information for nurses so that delirium could be treated quickly and effectively.

"Prior to intervention the occurrence of delirium on the two wards was 33 per cent, however after the project's completion delirium had been diagnosed and treated earlier and now there is only a 25 per cent prevalence of the condition," Andrea said.

Due to the success of the project there are plans to utilise the tools in everyday practice at RPH.

The next goal is to establish a recognised Age-Friendly ward at RPH as well as formalise pharmacological treatment practices for younger patients with delirium.