

Preparing nurse leaders to promote quality outcomes in the older adult population

Given the current healthcare climate, nurse practitioners (NP) must be equipped to demonstrate their value by contributing to the quality metrics of the organizations where they practice. Therefore, adult-gerontology nurse practitioner (NP)-doctorate of nursing practice (DNP) students need to be prepared to promote quality and safety and impact health outcomes for the aging adult population. To prepare students to lead quality initiatives, an innovative Quality and Safety for the Aging Adult course was developed when a College of Nursing transitioned its adult-gerontology program to the DNP degree. The course objectives align with key competencies including: the AACN DNP essentials (2006), the NP Core Competencies (2012), and the AACN Graduate-Level Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) (2012).

The course faculty developed a methodology to solicit the students' perspective on how the course prepared them to lead quality and safety initiatives for the aging adult population. Selected graduate level QSEN competencies related to course objectives were used to construct a survey to evaluate the student's preparation and confidence to perform key quality and safety skills. To evaluate knowledge related to older adults, "What Is Your Aging IQ?", an interactive aging survey from the National Institute on Aging (2010) was used.

Week 1 of the trimester, students completed the quality and safety survey and the "What is your aging IQ" quiz. Week 14 the students completed the quality and safety survey and responded to two discussion questions related to the Multidisciplinary Competencies in the Care of Older Adults (AGS, 2010) and the AACN Graduate-Level QSEN competencies (2012).

The quality and safety survey analysis included Cronbach alpha (.89), Pearson's chi squared tests, and factor analysis. Survey analysis yielded significant results for the students' preparation and confidence in applying selected quality and safety concepts. Common themes emerged from a qualitative review of the discussion responses.

The quality and safety in the aging adult curriculum positively influenced the preparation of this cohort of adult-gerontology NP-DNP students. Integrating gerontology with quality and safety content is one strategy to prepare adult-gerontology nurse practitioners to be leaders in promoting quality outcomes in the aging adult population.