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Using the arthritis self-management program toolkit to improve care planning for patients with osteoarthritis

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The prevalence of Osteoarthritis (OA) in the United States is alarming. It has a high occurrence among the older population. The symptoms of OA: pain, stiffness, and inflammation in the joints make it one of the five leading causes of disability among those affected. Disability results in home bound status and the need for home health nursing care. The economic impact of OA is distressing because of the increased rate of emergency room visits among osteoarthritis patients. Evidence-based interventions are necessary to address OA to reduce its impact on the functional abilities of those affected. The National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis 2010 recognized self-management as expedient in achieving effective OA management. Studies show that the evidence-based Arthritis Self-Management Program (ASMP) is effective in improving health status of patients with OA. Home health nurses need the knowledge to use ASMP in helping OA patients build self-management skills. This project attempted to motivate a change in a home health agency's nursing care plan for patients with OA. This change was stimulated through the implementation of a skill-training educational intervention that focused on the contents of ASMP. The Diffusion of Innovations Theory was used to guide development of the project. The success of this project was measured by interviewing the nurses to determine adherence to the new care plan that was developed based on the attributes of ASMP, and by auditing the patients' charts for evidence that the new material in the care plan was being implemented.

Biography

Sylvia Anasi, Clinical Care Manager at United Health Care Group, has extensive experience with the management of patient populations. She believes outcome improvements are best achieved through careful application of high-level evidence.

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