

Implementation of Information Technology in Nursing Practice – Challenge for Management in Psychiatric Nursing

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Abstract The implementation of information technology (IT) applications in nursing practice requires systematic investments and guidance. A collaborative organisational culture, and systematic and close clinical and administrative cooperation during the implementation process support the acceptance of IT among users in organisation. Although knowledge of IT projects management exists, there is a lack of knowledge about nursing management in IT implementation processes in psychiatric nursing.

Keywords: Nursing management, information technology, implementation, patient education

Objective

The objective of the study was to identify management related factors which support the implementation process of IT for patient education in psychiatric nursing from nurses' viewpoint.

Methods

The study is a part of larger project where an interactive Internet-portal application (Mieli.Net; engl. Mental.Net) was developed and implemented for patient education purposes in two psychiatric hospitals. The data were collected in spring 2006 using a questionnaire with open-ended questions about respondents' opinions on what factors might support the implementation of patient education application for daily nursing practice. The study population (N = 89, n = 56) consisted of all registered and practical nurses working on nine acute psychiatric wards and who had participated in a standardised Internet-based patient education programme. Total response rate was 63%. The data was analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Results

Three management related factors supporting the implementation process of IT for patient education in psychiatric nursing were found: operating environment, staff resources and operating principles of the organisation. The operating environment included sufficient and planned resource allocation for rooms, computers and Internet connections supported the acceptance and use of IT among nurses. Staff resources, including sufficient time for nurses to be trained, improved the use of the application. A systematically developed training scheme with assessment of individuals'

educational needs improved the acceptance and use of the application later in daily practice. The operating principles of the organisation included investments in time for intensive collaboration with nursing directors and nurses. Continuous meetings and discussions are important in IT implementation processes. Moreover, a patient-oriented action model and opportunities for intensive patient-nurse relationships in particular support the implementation of IT based patient education measures.

Conclusions

We can conclude that the commitment of nursing managers, collaboration between management and nursing staff, positive attitudes to new practices with IT and taking into account the patient-nurse relationship improve the implementation of IT in nursing practice in psychiatric nursing. When IT-based patient education applications are implemented in practice the patient-oriented action model in particular requires extra attention.

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