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The role of admissions assessment in monitoring physical health and in recognizing and responding to acute deterioration in the physical health of nursing home residents

Jennifer Adams

University of Bradford, UK

Residents are frail and likely to have complex, clinically unstable health problems. The context of care in a nursing home is significantly different to that in other UK care settings with little support from medical staff and specialists. Nursing homes attempt to provide a homely, domestic environment which can be in conflict with the management of acute deterioration in the physical health of residents. Assessment and monitoring of patients is seen as a key factor in improving patient safety and outcomes related to deterioration in health in the hospital setting. However, little is known about admissions assessment and ongoing monitoring in UK nursing homes and there is a need to improve the early recognition and appropriate response to acute physical deterioration of residents. This research intends to identify barriers and facilitators to good practice in assessment and monitoring in UK nursing homes and make recommendations to improve the recognition of and response to acute deterioration in the health of residents. This is a qualitative study with a multiple case study design. Within each nursing home case study data collection methods includes: Observation of admissions assessments, 'Go-along' interviews with staff, analysis of assessment documentation and care plans and interviews with residents and relatives. Early findings will offer different perspectives on the admissions assessment and how staff and relatives monitor residents, recognize changes in health and respond to physical deterioration in the health of residents.

j.adams@bradford.ac.uk