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Optimising the Care of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Hospital

When caring for a child with an intellectual disability, the nurse must ensure value and respect for the child. The nurse must reflect on her own biases and know that each child needs support when hospitalized (Glasper, 2017). Dr. Edward Glasper (2017) wrote a research article explaining how implementing preadmission programs for children with disabilities is a way to prepare them for admission. The program includes child life specialists and play therapists, utilizing therapeutic play since it is vital to children's development (Glasper, 2017). Also, using Erikson's stages of psychosocial development determines the type of therapeutic play used for each child. For example, if toddlers have to have shots, they are more likely to be scared and nervous of needles. Using therapeutic play would include taking stuffed animals or dolls and giving them an injection to help ease the child's mind. Having a child life specialist and play therapist mitigates any fears and phobias intellectually disabled children may have and ensures each child receives the highest level of care.

Another way to improve inpatient care for children with disabilities is to require hospitals to have a "flagging" system that makes intellectually disabled children more visible to the healthcare team (Glasper, 2017). The "flagging" system is a part of the child's electronic health record that includes the type of disability, likes, dislikes, and how they express pain (Glasper, 2017). Implementing this system is an excellent way for the healthcare system and families to collaborate. Parents and caregivers of children with disabilities will feel more at ease.

The Disparities of Healthcare Access for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that impairs social communication and interaction skills (Calleja et al., 2019). The diagnosis of ASD usually

develops in childhood by age 5 (Calleja et al., 2019). Individuals with ASD are known to be aggressive, disruptive, and exhibit self-injuring behaviors (Calleja et al., 2019). To accurately identify the disparities experienced by individuals with ASD, researchers must first determine the level and appropriateness of access to healthcare services (Calleja et al., 2019).

The goal is to promote health equality and reduce health disparities for individuals with disabilities. Individuals with intellectual disabilities have a higher prevalence of alcohol use, drug use, sexually transmitted infections, hypertension, and seizures (Calleja et al., 2019). These individuals have unmet healthcare needs due to the lack of access to appropriate healthcare services (Calleja et al., 2019). Having access to healthcare can improve these individuals' quality of life and bring them to an optimal state of health. Many intellectually disabled individuals suffer from psychiatric disorders resulting from social challenges, lack of appropriate interventions, and challenges with accessing healthcare (Calleja et al., 2019). Thus, having access to healthcare also reduces their risk for comorbid psychiatric disorders.

References:

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