

Clinical Professional Development Programme In Spinal Column/Spinal Cord Injury Nursing

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Background

The treatment of a patient with a Spinal Column / Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) is multifaceted. It can be a catastrophic experience for the patient and their family. The development of care of patients with Spinal Column / SCI has been characterised by increasing complexity, rapid continuous change, technological innovations and advances in health care.

Nurses play a critical role in health care and have a significant impact on the quality of care provided to patients with a Spinal Column / SCI.

The role of the Spinal Nurse is to assist patients to achieve and maintain their optimum level of physical and psychosocial function.

The Spinal Nurse must have specific knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the spine and nervous system in order to assess, plan and implement the specialised nursing care required for this patient group.

The scope of Spinal Column / SCI Nursing incorporates:

- Surgical care for patients with degenerative spinal conditions
- Trauma Care
- Acute Care Stabilization of the Patient
- Rehabilitation
- Health maintenance and management of unrelated medical/surgical issues
- Psychological support for the patient and their family
- Discharge planning and follow up of the patient

The National Spinal Injuries Unit (NSIU), Mater Misericordiae University Hospital and the Spinal Cord Injury Service, National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) hold a unique position in the Republic of Ireland in the care of patients with Spinal Column/SCI. In light of this position a programme of Nurse Education was deemed essential and was developed with the Centre for Nurse Education (CNE), MMUH.

Objective

The development of a 'cross site' programme of Nurse education in Spinal Column / SCI between the National Spinal Injuries Unit (NSIU), MMUH and National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH), Dunlaoghaire in order to:

- To provide the Registered Nurse with the opportunity to develop the specialist knowledge and skills required to deliver safe quality nursing care to the Spinal Column /Spinal Cord Injured patient, across the continuum of care
- To encourage the Registered Nurse to contribute to the development of research and innovation in Spinal Column /SCI Nursing, within their organisation.

Course Structure

Central to the programme delivery was the acute management and the rehabilitation of patients with Spinal Column / Spinal Cord Injuries across the continuum of care.

The programme is delivered over 27 weeks divided into two units:

Unit 1: Introduction and Initial Management of Spinal Column / SCI

This unit provides an introduction to Spinal Column / SCI Nursing. It addresses the initial concerns regarding the management of the patient, the acute care and their rehabilitation. This unit is designed to;

- Develop the participants knowledge of Spinal Column / SCI
- Facilitate participants understanding in caring for patients during the early stages of Spinal Column /SCI.
- Facilitate participants understanding of rehabilitation across the continuum of care

Unit 2: The Nursing Management of Spinal Column / SCI

This unit addresses the on-going management of the patient with a Spinal Column / SCI.

It addresses the ongoing management of the patient with a Spinal Column / SCI

- Further develop the participants knowledge of the physiological and psychological effects of a Spinal Column / SCI on the patient
- Facilitate participants to develop their knowledge and skills in caring for patients with a Spinal Column / SCI across the continuum of care
- Facilitate participants understanding of educating , counseling , empowering and enabling patients with a Spinal Column / SCI, and their families/significant others .

The course is delivered using a combination of methodologies, including Lectures/presentations, Discussions, Demonstrations, Practical workshops, Clinical practice, Self – directed learning, and Reflective practice.

FULL CERVICAL SPINAL TURN

Assessment Structure

Assessment is both formal and informal along with the completion of a competency based clinical assessment.

Assessment	Assessment Weighting
Written Assessment	50%
Patient Discharge Assessment	30%
Reflections	20%
Clinical Learning Outcomes	Pass/Fail

Award Level

The programme has been accredited by University College Dublin (UCD) with 10 academic credits at level 8.

We are currently reviewing the programme with the CNE and UCD regarding the potential development of a post graduate diploma which can then lead to a Masters thus creating a pathway for the development of the Spinal Column / SCI nurse which will positively impact on the Quality of Care this patient group receives.

Evaluation

The programme has just finished its 3rd year and feedback to date has been extremely positive.

Feedback from overall programme 2016

"Excellent course, excellently delivered, clinical placements excellent"

"I have gained huge confidence in my clinical area & would highly recommend the course to the rest of my colleagues"

"The facilitators are very much approachable & they were very helpful"

Feedback from the lectures

"The lectures were clear, precise and easy to understand"

"Very applicable to nursing care for spinal patients"

"I learnt a lot from the reflective experiences"

Feedback from clinical placements

"Excellent learning potential enhanced by staff willing to engage & explain on site.

"Great placement. Very happy with learning outcomes achieved."

"Placement well coordinated, learning beneficial as relevant to classroom teaching. Staff approachable & helpful."