



Linking Research to Practice Using the DNP in a NICHE

Thresa Haithcock, DNP, RN, ACNS-BC and Debbie Green, DNP, RN, CNS, ANP/GNP, CENP

Cone Health/Annie Penn Hospital



Introduction

The Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) is a clinical doctorate preparing nurses to bridge research and clinical practice.

In order to provide quality care to older adults, the Nurses Improving Care to Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) program provides hospitals with the tools to create the systemic changes necessary to support nurses in their efforts to improve quality of care to older patients, while also providing improved education and training in gerontologic issues for nursing staff.

NICHE is a self-sustaining program coordinated by the John A. Hartford Foundation Institute for Geriatric Nursing.

The objective is to describe the role of the DNP in the operationalization of NICHE and illustrate the impact of NICHE implementation on knowledge and attitudes related to geriatric concepts of care, and the geriatric care environment in a hospital.

Background of the DNP Program

The DNP is a practice-focused doctorate and terminal degree for professional nursing practice per the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN).

DNPs focus heavily on innovative and evidence-based practice, which reflects the application of credible research findings.

The DNP is ideally suited to lead the implementation of NICHE. DNPs are prepared as clinical practice experts. They possess the advanced communication skills and quality improvement process knowledge, to lead patient safety initiatives in health care systems.

NICHE Implementation Goals

Evidence has shown the implementation of NICHE contributes to:

- Improved clinical outcomes
- Positive fiscal results
- Enhanced nursing competencies
- Community recognition
- Greater patient, family, and staff satisfaction

DNP Preparation

DNPs are well prepared to implement NICHE based on the AACN 8 Essentials of the Doctoral Education of Advanced Practice Nursing. Most notable related to this project:

- Scientific underpinnings for practice: ability to translate scientific knowledge quickly and effectively, develop and evaluate new practice approaches
- Organizational and systems leadership for quality improvement and systems thinking
- Interprofessional collaboration: knowledge of effective team leadership

Methods

Two DNP students took part in the education and training of the NICHE program and implementation, along with clinical staff leadership. The Geriatric Institutional Assessment Profile is a valid and reliable survey tool used by NICHE to assess knowledge and attitudes related to geriatric principles emphasized in the NICHE program. This survey was completed before and after focused geriatric education for clinical staff.

Findings

- The DNP, as an expert clinician, is in the best position to implement quality programs to improve health care outcomes.
- The findings of this project support how the DNP in the NICHE program can improve outcomes based on advanced education focused on improving clinical practice by education of staff, patient, and family, improvement in documentation, and interdisciplinary collaboration.
- The GIAP reflected statistically significant improvement in all of the knowledge domains. Professional issues and geriatric care environment as measured by the GIAP showed improvement or no change. Attitude measurement showed no change, which is actually a positive finding. In the preassessment, attitudes were very high, contradictory to the level of knowledge. With knowledge domains improving and attitudes staying the same, reflects more of a balance between knowledge and attitudes.



References Available on Request