

Grant Outcomes Report:

Frances Schervier Home and Hospital:

Recognition and Treatment of Pain in Cognitively Impaired Older Adults: A Video Library

I. Executive Summary

This grant to the Schervier Center for Research in Geriatric Care (the Center) supported the production of a set of educational DVDs on recognition of pain in cognitively impaired older adults. Administrators in every nursing home in New York State received a copy of these DVDs, as did State policymakers and several health care systems located on the East Coast.

II. The Problem

Complications and consequences of untreated pain are widespread among nursing home residents. Falls, depression, anxiety, diminished quality of life, and higher health care utilization are only a few of the complications associated with pain. Despite the impact of pain on nursing home residents, experts estimate that 49% to 83% of nursing home residents have substantial pain that is underdetected and undertreated.¹ The problem is worse for residents who are cognitively impaired and unable to communicate their discomfort. Unfortunately, nursing home staff often lack education and training in this area.² Therefore, providing a practical means of pain management education for long-term care staff could improve the quality of care and life for this vulnerable population.

III. Grant Activities & Outcomes

In June 2008, the Center hosted a full-day conference, with nationally recognized experts in the field of pain management, aimed at improving the quality of care provided to cognitively impaired nursing home residents in New York State. Approximately 150 regional professionals and paraprofessionals who care for older adults, as well as participants from nursing homes,

¹ American Geriatrics Society (AGS) Panel on Persistent Pain in Older Persons (2002).

² The Management of Persistent Pain in Older Persons. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*; 50(56), S205-S224.

KEY INFORMATION:

GRANTEE

Frances Schervier Home and Hospital
DBA Schervier Nursing Care Center

GRANT TITLE

Recognition & Treatment of Pain in
Cognitively Impaired Older Adults:
A Video Library

DATES

March 2008–December 2008

GRANT AMOUNT

\$20,046

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attended the conference. A panel of long-term care experts—such as Keela Herr, Ph.D., from the University of Iowa and Terry Altilio from the Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City—spoke about:

- methods to recognize and treat pain in older adults;
- non-pharmacologic pain interventions with older adults;
- challenges in pharmacologic intervention with older adults;
- how to implement best practices in pain management in the long-term care environment; and
- ethical issues in pain management at the end of life.

With grant funds, the Center hired a production company to film the event and produced 800 educational DVD library sets. These DVDs were distributed to administrators of all 694 nursing homes in New York; select conference participants and people who expressed interest but could not attend; State policymakers; and several health care systems in the East Coast. Nursing home administrators were encouraged to view the DVD and share it with their nursing home staffs. Approximately four weeks later, the Center sent out a survey to the nursing homes to evaluate the impact of the DVD library, particularly the new skills and knowledge gained by staff from viewing the DVD.

The project's overall goals were to expand the reach of a one-day conference beyond the attendees, and to create a resource that could be integrated into nursing home education programs. Ultimately, the project aimed to improve quality of life for cognitively impaired nursing home residents suffering from unrecognized pain.

150
Approximately 150 regional professionals and paraprofessionals who care for older adults, as well as participants from nursing homes, attended the conference.



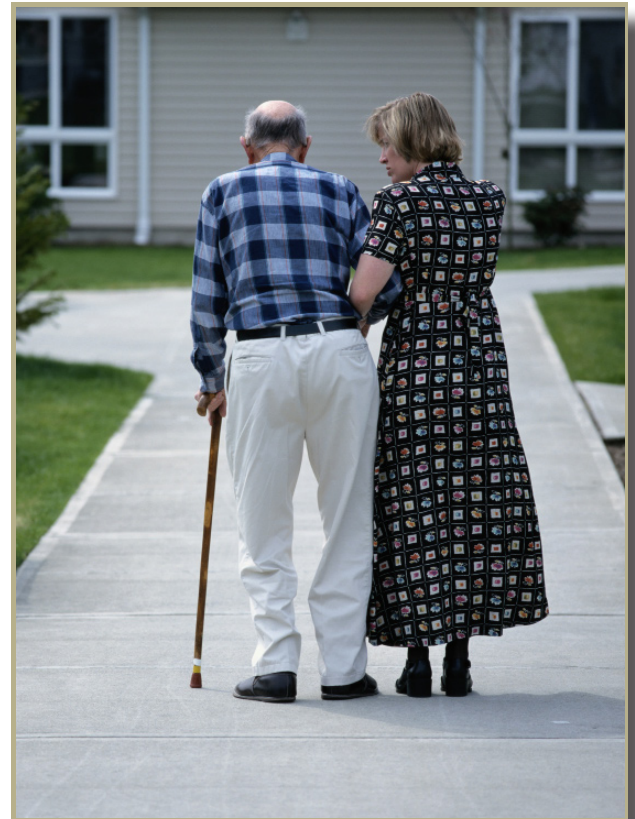
PROJECT'S OVERALL GOALS:

- Expand the reach of a one-day conference beyond the attendees
- Create a resource that could be integrated into nursing home education programs
- Improve quality of life for cognitively impaired nursing home residents suffering from unrecognized pain

IV. Key Findings

Among the project's key findings were:

- The survey response rate was fairly low with 6% of surveys completed and returned (42 of 694), thus results must be interpreted with caution. Of those who responded, 19 indicated they have viewed the DVD library while 14 plan to do so. The low response rate could be attributed to a variety of factors, including a delay in the DVD production—which led to the short amount of time nursing home staff had in viewing and sharing the DVD library before completing the survey—and the coincidence of the mailing occurring during a holiday season.
- Of the nursing home staff who did view the product, many reported an increase in their knowledge of pain recognition, pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic treatments, ethical issues, and how to implement best practices in pain management in the long-term care setting. For example, on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being “not at all” and 10 being “a great deal,” the average score was 7.5 for increased knowledge in implementing best practices in pain management; 7.5 for increased knowledge of ethical issues in pain management at the end of life; and 7.1 for increased knowledge of pharmacologic interventions for pain. For respondents who have used or planned to use the DVD library for education, it was or will be used for a wide range of disciplines, including medicine, nursing, social work, pastoral care, dietary, housekeeping, recreation, and rehabilitation. Respondents also responded favorably to the technical quality of the DVD.
- Targeting distribution of the DVD to nursing home administrators was one strategy to gain their buy-in and encourage nursing home staff to learn and adopt new, evidence-based care practices. The low response rate from nursing home administrators and lack of follow-up, however, raises questions about the effectiveness of this strategy. For example, it is unclear if the survey respondents who said they would watch the DVD library have actually done so. Among those who have watched the DVD, are the practices being incorporated into trainings for current and new staff members? Are nursing home staff using this information as they care for residents to identify and manage pain and increase patient quality of life? If there is an impact, will it be sustained?



IV. Key Findings (continued)

- If given the opportunity to do this project again, NYSHealth and the Center would consider the following modifications:
 - interview key nursing home administrators and staff—before beginning the project—to assess whether a DVD library is a useful and practical tool to help improve pain recognition and management practices within nursing homes;
 - include an outreach strategy to raise awareness of the project, increase communication with nursing homes, and actively engage key administrators within each facility prior to mailing the DVD library;
 - distribute the DVD library to targeted audiences, including conference participants, people who expressed interest in the conference but could not attend, and nursing home staff who provide direct care to residents;
 - incorporate sufficient time in the project work plan to account for:
 1. possible production delays,
 2. nursing home staff to view and integrate the product into trainings, and
 3. appropriate survey response time to assess and determine the long-term usage and effects of the DVD library;
 - randomly select a sub-sample of nursing homes (which may be stratified by region, size, and for-profit vs. nonprofit status) to focus survey efforts, using follow-up mailings and phone calls as necessary to obtain a higher response rate; and
 - collaborate with nursing homes to establish a plan for translating the video material into nursing home practice and sustaining that impact.



FUNDING INITIATIVE:

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY GRANTS
FALL 2007

Under this Request For Proposals, NYSHealth funded special opportunities that represented a one-time chance for an organization or group of organizations to have a large impact on the health of a group of people. By supporting this project, NYSHealth helped a small organization with a simple idea to broadly disseminate information for the potential benefit of nursing home staff and ultimately residents statewide.

V. The Future

The DVD library and lessons learned from this grant will serve to complement the Center's ongoing work, such as its three-year project, funded by the New York State Department of Health, to develop evidence-based guidelines to assess pain in cognitively impaired older adults.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ABOUT THE GRANTEE

The Schervier Center for Research in Geriatric Care, part of the Bon Secours New York Health System, was established in 2006. The Center capitalizes on the years of research previously conducted by the Social Service/Research Department at Schervier Nursing Care Center with nursing home populations. Support for the Center's activities is based on grants and contributions. To accomplish its mission of improving the quality of life for elders, the Center's goals are to:

- conduct groundbreaking research on various aspects in the field of aging;
- develop and apply new and innovative programs;
- host professional conferences that will promote education and collaboration among those serving the elderly;
- provide customized education and training to health care professionals and paraprofessionals in nursing homes and other home care settings;
- provide consultation and technical assistance to others in the field.

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