

Health Promotion Project: Decreasing Health Disparities in Geriatric Population

Student's Name

Institutional Affiliations

Date

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### Project Background and Goal

Geriatric population in America is expected to increase following the aging baby boomers population. At the same time, the diversity of the American population regarding culture increasingly, with 2010 census indicating 36% of the American population is from the minority groups (Healthy People, 2015). Therefore, the increasing old population is expected to comprise a significant percentage of the minorities. Weinick & Wynia, 2011, identified notable levels of health care disparities along racial, ethnic, social class and age. The geriatric population is more associated with chronic conditions; thus, their demand for health care services may be higher than the young generation. The existence of health disparities within the health care systems for the geriatric population can, therefore, affect this population's health gravely (Health People, 2015). It is in this respect that the goal of this project is to decrease health disparities in the geriatric population.

### Intervention

The appropriate plan for addressing the described goal is developed with insight from Chin, Clarke, Nocon et al., 2012. The proposed intervention entails enforcing the culture of equity in health care delivering. This intervention will be achieved in four main steps - sensitizing on the existence of health disparities; reinforcing the imperativeness of equity health care among nurses; establishing feasible equity compliance guidelines at the institutional level; implementing the guidelines, and lastly evaluation and feedback process. These processes constitute an approach to successful implementation of change, which requires effective involvement of all affected parties and preparing the atmosphere for the proposed change. A lasting solution must be adopted as a protocol and assimilated into the organizational culture; otherwise, such a change may be doomed to fail (Chin, Clarke, Nocon

et al., 2012). This argument is the main reason for adopting an equity culture in health delivery is the best intervention in addressing health disparities in healthcare.

#### Relevance to Future Practice

A valuable nursing competency in the contemporary and future nursing practice is the cultural competence (Chin, Clarke, Nocon et al., 2012). Achievement of nursing competency can be affected immensely where significant cases of disparities are reported in the health care system. Therefore, the vitality of addressing health disparities among the geriatric population has a significant impact on the future of nursing practice. In addition, the old generation is said to be increasing, especially with the aging baby-boomers generation (Healthy People, 2015). This population will have a significant impact on the nursing practices given it may exacerbate the nurse's workload in a field already affected by increased nursing shortage. Failure to addressing health disparity may expose the nurse to legal liabilities on the argument of discrimination. Moreover, nurses have an obligation to deliver healthcare services to all patients without bias, prejudice, or favoritism (Chin, Clarke, Nocon et al., 2012). Evaluating and implementing a project that addresses the health disparity among the geriatric population will help the nurse to prepare adequately to meet field challenges; thus, reduce legal liabilities, and improve the delivery of nursing care (Weinick & Wynia, 2011). Finally, an interest to work with the geriatric population motivated the selection of the project for the purpose of getting to know the issues affecting equitable, quality, and safe nursing care to the elderly.

#### Plan for Needed Data and Information

Appropriate data will be collected from the hospitals records, patient complaints/complements book, and through interviews with selected staff and patients. These approaches of data and information gathering are preferred for a possibility of gathering

primary and secondary data and getting past and present information. The interview data will be collected before implementation of the program, and after program implementation for comparison purposes. Data collected will be appraised and evaluated for its credibility, validity, and reliability for reinforcing the appropriateness, feasibility and effectiveness of the project.

In conclusion, health disparity in the geriatric population can have grave consequences given the increasing growth in the population of the minorities and the old. A feasible approach for addressing this issue is proposed, which involve embedding the culture of equity health care using locally adaptable guidelines. This project builds on nurse awareness on issues affecting geriatric nursing, improve cultural competence, and abreast the nurse with legal and professional responsibilities in nursing practice. Data is to be collected before and after intervention implementation and mainly sourced from hospital records, staffs, and patient. Evaluation of the intervention will be very crucial towards improving the intervention for better results.

## Reference

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<<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/older-adults>>
- Weinick, R. M. & Wynia, R.H. (2011). Quality improvement efforts under health reform: how to ensure that they help reduce disparities – not increase them. *Health Affairs*. 30(10):1837-1843.