Session: "Meeting the Challenge of Agitation in the Elderly"

Date: Thursday, March 29, 2012
10:45am-12:00pm

Participants: Norman L. Foster, MD, Neurologist, Center for Alzheimer’s Care, Imaging and Research, University of Utah
Carrie Schonlaw, SSW, Director, Five-County Area Agency on Aging, Division of Aging and Adult Services, Utah Department of Human Services
Nancy Morrill, BS, CDMS, SSW, Social Services Director and Discharge Planner, Kolob Care and Rehabilitation

Session Description / Summary:

Agitation in the elderly is a frequent cause of emergency room visits, nursing home admissions and psychiatric hospitalization. It usually is associated with a dementing disease, either with or without delirium, and develops gradually allowing interventions that can prevent escalation to a care crisis. In a panel format we will identify difficulties in treating agitation in the elderly, explain mechanisms, and offer solutions. The Utah State Alzheimer Plan recognizes that the quality of care for behavior disturbance often is poor and has proposed a series of recommendations, including improved family support, non-drug interventions, the establishment of outpatient geriatric psychiatry services and outreach to rural areas through telepsychiatry. We will welcome discussion of difficult cases from the audience.

Session Timeline / Presentations:

10:45-11:00 Practical Challenges of Managing Agitated Elderly Patients: Report from the Front Line – Nancy Morrill
11:00-11:15 Agitation in the Elderly: A Rural Perspective – Carrie Schonlaw
11:15-11:30 Understanding Agitation in Dementia: An Environmental Approach and the Utah State Plan – Norman Foster
11:30-12:00 Audience Case Discussion

Session Objectives:

As a result of attending this session, individuals will be able to:
- Recognize the institutional barriers to providing behavioral services to patients with dementia
- Identify community resources that can be utilized to prevent agitation in elderly patients
- Discuss why agitation occurs in patients with memory deficits
- Describe the principles of non-pharmacological management of agitation; and
- List Utah’s goals for dementia care and proposed solutions for behavioral disturbance

Suggested Reading: