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THE ROLE OF PSYCHIATRIC NURSES IN MANAGING PSYCHOTIC DEPRESSION IN OLDER ADULTS

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Introduction: Psychotic depression in older adults is a severe and invalidating disorder. In a residential acute psychiatric setting older patients with psychotic depression often do not drink, eat and are dehydrated and underfed. The treatment consists of a combination of (tricyclic) antidepressants and an antipsychotic or electroconvulsive therapy. The monitoring of vital parameters and side effects of medication is important and intensive. Furthermore, psychiatric nurses can play an important role in conducting semi-structured interviews to rate the severity of psychotic depression in older adults.

Purposes: The purpose of our study is to identify important nursing goals in the treatment of psychotic depression in older adults, to establish the clinical validity of rating of psychiatric nurses in relation to independent rating of a senior psychiatrist and psychologist.

Methods: A qualitative analysis of electronic patients' records. A clinical validation of the psychotic depression assessment scale (PDAS).

Results: The analysis yielded important features for psychiatric nurses on four core domains. We included 62 older adults (mean age 74.2) and conducted semi-structured interviews based on the psychotic depression assessment scale (PDAS) at admission and every 3 weeks during admission. The PDAS showed to be unidimensional with a Loevinger coefficient of 0.46, clinically valid with a good to optimal correlation of the PDAS with the CGI-S (0.76) and the MADRS (0.79) and responsive with a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between baseline and endpoint scores in this sample of severely ill patients. The results will be presented in detail.

Conclusion: Trained psychiatric nurses can play an important role in informing clinical practice on the severity of psychotic depression.

Biography

Tom Vermeulen is a Master in Nursing Science and Researcher (PhD) at the University Psychiatric Hospital of Duffel, Belgium. He is Head of the admission ward for old age psychiatry, a ward specialised in the treatment of severe and psychotic depression in older adults. He translated the Psychotic Depression Assessment Scale and validated it for Dutch and in older adults. His main scientific focus is Cognition in Psychotic Depression and the Potential Association with Emerging Dementia, especially Vascular Dementia. His research at this moment is A Longitudinal Study on Psychotic Depression and Cognition that follows patients on cognition and depression severity for 18 months. He works as an Advanced Practice Nurse in the field of Old Age Psychiatry.

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