

Depression or hostility monitoring and precautions

Introduction

A patient diagnosed with depression or hostility requires careful observation to prevent him from harming himself or others. In addition to close observation and assessment, frequent interaction with the patient is required.

Implementation

1. Explain your actions to the patient before and during your observation.
2. Observe and interact with the patient every 15 minutes around the clock. Be especially attentive when the patient is in the restroom.
3. Remove all potentially harmful objects from the patient and his surroundings. The patient should be dressed in pajamas unless otherwise ordered by the doctor.
4. Restrict the patient to the unit at all times except in an emergency or when otherwise ordered by the doctor. Make sure that the patient is accompanied when off the unit.
5. Observe the patient closely during meals and ensure that all tableware and dinnerware used by the patient are returned. The patient shouldn't leave the unit for meals.
6. Allow visitors as the patient's condition permits and as the doctor orders. Check any packages brought in by visitors. Keep the patient on the unit and continue to monitor him every 15 minutes.
7. Encourage your patient to express his feelings and thoughts about homicide, suicide, agitation, destructive behavior, depression, and hope for the future.
8. Increase observation to one-one-one if the patient's behavior warrants it.
9. Document the procedure.

Documentation

Document your observations in the patient's progress notes every shift, and as needed. Also note the patient's expressions about his feelings of self-worth and anger, sleeping and eating patterns, changes in energy level, and interactions with others. Note and report attempts by the patient to harm himself or others.

References

1. Holcomb, S.S. "Identification and Treatment of Depression," *The Nurse Practitioner* 31(12):42-44, December 2006.
2. Jacobs, D.G., et al. (2003, November). "Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Patients with Suicidal Behaviors" [Online]. Accessed October 2009 via the Web at http://www.psychiatryonline.com/pracGuide/pracGuideChapToc_14.aspx.
3. Karasu, T., et al. (2000, April). "Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Patients with Major Depressive Disorder, Second Edition" [Online]. Accessed October 2009 via the Web at http://www.psychiatryonline.com/pracGuide/pracGuideChapToc_7.aspx.

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1. Explain the procedure to the patient.
2. Remove harmful objects from the patient's surroundings.
3. Observe and interact with the patient at 15-minute intervals.
4. Observe the patient during mealtimes. Make sure all tableware and dinnerware remain in the dining area.
5. Allow the patient to have visitors, if appropriate, and continue to monitor the patient at 15-minute intervals.
6. Encourage the patient to express his feelings.
7. Document the procedure.