Role of the Spinal Cord Injury Nurses in Recognizing and Preventing Caregiver Burnout
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Problem:
People who dedicate themselves to caregiving for a chronically ill or disabled family member are more prone to burnout. Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) nurses can educate the caregivers to recognize and prevent caregiver burnout.

Evidence:
Between 40-45% of individuals with SCI, need personal assistance with some activities of daily living. Many individuals with SCI, rely on family members or a friend to assist them with care giving. Caregiving involves many stressors such as family dynamic, household interruption, financial strain, and the excessive amount of work involved.

Strategy:
SCI nurses are in an ideal position to recognize the signs and symptoms of burnout among the caregivers of the SCI patients. SCI nurses frequently encounter the caregivers while the patient is hospitalized or during outpatient visits. SCI nurses can educate the caregivers to differentiate between stress and burnout. Education for burnout prevention should include, taking breaks, using respite care, delegating tasks, educating oneself on the condition of the loved one, joining a caregiver support group, reaching out to internet web sites that address care giver needs, seeking counseling, getting adequate rest and sleep, utilizing community resources such as adult day care, personal care providers and home health services.

Practice Change:
At the time of each encounter with the patient, the SCI nurse should screen the caregiver for signs and symptoms of burnout. Caregiver burnout can be prevented and managed by timely recognition and intervention with several strategies including education and appropriate resources.

Evaluation:
Periodic screening of the caregiver for the symptoms of burnout, should alert the SCI nurses to identify at risk individuals. These individuals should be provided with education and community resources to prevent burnout.

Results:
Knowledge related to symptoms of burnout and strategies for preventing burnout among caregivers can be a powerful weapon. By providing education and community resources for the caregivers, SCI nurses can enhance the rewards of caregiving. With proper guidance caregivers can be more productive taking care of those who depend on them.
**Recommendation:**
SCI nurses should screen the caregiver(s) for symptoms of burnout, at each encounter to increase the chance of recognizing, identifying, and preventing burnout.

**Bibliography:**


