

Lecture

The Role of Psychiatric Liaison Nurse in a General Hospital

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Abstract

Psychiatric consultation liaison nursing is a subspecialty of psychiatric mental health nursing initiated in the early 1960s. Usually the psychiatric consultation liaison nurse (PCLN) has a master's degree and a background in psychiatric and medical nursing. The PCLN functions as a consultant to other health professionals in managing psychological concerns and symptoms of psychiatric disorders and as a clinician who works directly to help the patient deal more effectively with physical and emotional problems. The PCLN is a resource for members of a nursing staff who feel unable to intervene therapeutically with a patient who presents a management problem or has problems that impede care. Psychological factors have been found to influence a variety of physical illnesses. Stressful life events may result in further health risk and increase disability through stress-related physiological responses. When psychiatric disorders are present along with general medical conditions, they may increase the likelihood of adverse events, length of stay, and cost; they also may negatively impact on outcomes and increase morbidity and mortality. Growing support for the role of the PCLN in assisting general nurses in caring for patients experiencing mental health problems in the general hospital environment is evident from the relevant literature. However, there remains a paucity of research which examines the process of this nursing role or its impact on outcomes for nurses and patients.

