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Kubra Yeni

Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Nursing, Samsun, Türkiye

Psychosocial problems and nursing management in patients with epilepsy

Epilepsy is a neurological disorder characterized by seizures caused by abnormal electrical discharges in the brain, affecting approximately 70 million individuals worldwide. Although epilepsy is a neurological disease, it has been attributed mystical meanings and categorized differently throughout history. Despite significant medical advances in the field of epilepsy, prejudices, misconceptions and discrimination still prevail. Although these prejudices against the disease are often prevalent in underdeveloped and developing countries, they are also present in many developed countries. In this sense, epilepsy becomes a social label rather than a clinical problem. Many epilepsy patients hide their disease and isolate themselves from society because of stigma. At least half of the patients are diagnosed with anxiety and depression. Patients who are discriminated against because of their disease face many problems in getting married, finding a job, and continuing their school life. It is even reported that individuals with epilepsy who cannot cope with the problems they experience turn to suicidal behavior. Therefore, epilepsy patients have to cope with both medical and psychosocial burden. Nurses have important responsibilities in managing these problems experienced by patients with epilepsy. First of all, the patient should be supported to adapt to the disease and treatment. Prejudices and misconceptions should be eliminated by providing education to patients, their relatives and all members of the society. In addition, qualitative and quantitative studies should be conducted to detail the problems experienced by patients and contribute to the literature. Patients should be evaluated in detail and referred to psychologists and psychiatrists if necessary. Patients should be directed to associations related to epilepsy and interventions should be planned to increase their social functions. As a result, detailed evaluation of epilepsy patients who experience many psychosocial problems, adaptation to the disease, providing trainings to patients and the community and planning interventions to increase the social functions of patients are among the important responsibilities of nurses in disease management.

Keywords: epilepsy, psychosocial problems, nursing management

Biography

Kubra Yeni graduated from Ondokuz Mayıs University School of Nursing. She got her master's (2014) and Ph.D. degrees (2020) from the Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing. She has studies on epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and stroke, generally deals with the psychosocial aspect of the diseases. She is a member of the National Neurology Nursing Association and Turkish Epilepsy Society (Turkish Chapter of ILEA). She is currently working as an associate professor at Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Nursing in Türkiye.