TOPCARE ON TOUR: Five steps to create experience and evidence based practice for long term HD nursing care

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Methods
A five step method:
1. Focus groups meeting with nursing staff to explore which type of care needs is specific for HD.
2. Evaluate how these nursing care needs are met, based on experience, and describe this in experienced based protocols (EBP).
3. Search of both literature (including similar morbidities) and practice (from focus groups) on potential better alternatives.
4. Choose (small and larger) scale topics to evaluate both current and alternative practices.
5. Update the EBP to Experienced And Evidence Based protocols (E&EBP+)

Results
On three wards specific needs of HD patients and nursing care delivery were acknowledged (step1). Interestingly, nurses focused on the domains of patient autonomy and quality of life much more than on specific ADL needs. Specific care protocols and evidence in literature are mostly absent, and experience is transferred informally.

Several gaps in knowledge were identified, and several steps towards solutions of these gaps initiated. Examples are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge gap</th>
<th>Direction of solution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care needs of elderly HD patients with dementia</td>
<td>Qualitative comparison research- what elements of dementia care should we introduce?</td>
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<tr>
<td>High incidental dropout of day care clinic</td>
<td>Qualitative research: what could lower this dropout rate: too busy day schedule at daycare?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low engagement family and volunteers</td>
<td>Better instruction material and introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nail clipping in patients with severe chorea</td>
<td>Instruction protocol</td>
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</table>

Conclusion
Combining experience with evidence is a new and promising method to improve care for HD in LTCF. It sets the agenda for research, guidelines and education based on actual knowledge needs of nurses.