

Nursing and Allied Health Abstracts

Title: THE USE OF AN INSTRUCTIONAL SKIN CARE DVD FOR THOSE WITH SPINA BIFIDA OR SCI: IS THERE AN EFFECT ON KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOR?

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Background: Individuals with spina bifida (SB) often have decreased lower extremity (L/E) sensation and may be at high risk for burns, ulcerations and amputations.

In a chart review of over 100 patients with SB at Gillette Lifetime Clinic, 90% of patients age 16 and above had at least one area of insensate skin. 78% had had previous significant skin injuries, and 7.5% had undergone L/E amputations.

At our clinic, previous interventions of foot evaluation and education did not seem to decrease the wound rate. This researcher developed an 11' long DVD to teach patients and/or caregivers how to inspect, wash and care for their L/E's. In addition, proper sock and shoe selection and orthotic wear is presented.

Method: 40 subjects (36 with SB, 4 with SCI) were recruited at clinic appointments for this study and assigned randomly to early or delayed intervention groups. Pre-tests were administered before subjects watched the DVD (2, 6 months apart for the delayed group). After watching the DVD, post-tests about skin care knowledge and reported behavior were administered (2, 6-months apart for delayed group).

Results: Both groups of subjects showed significant improvements on total scores for the 21-item test (p-value .002 for the delayed intervention, .013 for the early intervention group). Cohen's effect size was .72 for delayed group, .59 for early intervention group). These improvements were maintained for 6 months in the early intervention group.

Conclusion: This educational DVD is best used in conjunction with face-to-face instruction , role-playing and problem solving about barriers to appropriate L/E skin care. Repetition of the educational information is essential due to common environmental and executive functioning issues. There is a subset of those with SB who will always need assistance to safely care for their insensate L/E skin.