

INTERNET TRAINING TOOLS PROVEN SUCCESSFUL

Interactive program helps caregivers prevent resident aggression.

MEG LAPORTE

The Internet has once again proven beneficial to long term care providers—this time in the form of an interactive training tool for nurse assistants, according to a recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*.

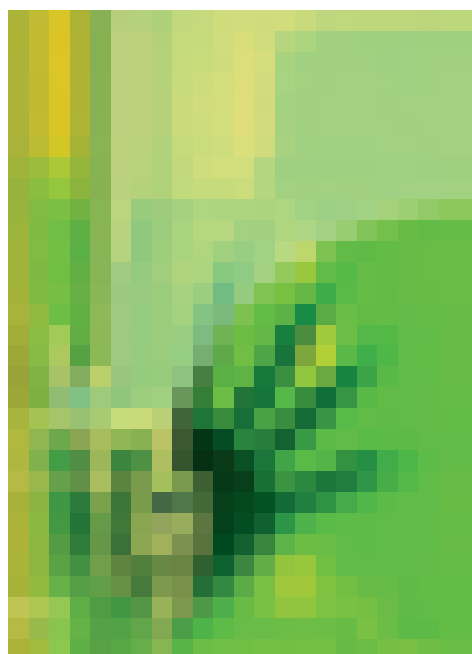
The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of an interactive Internet-based program that trains nurse assistants to prevent aggression among nursing facility residents.

Researchers from the Oregon Center for Applied Science and Florida State University conducted the study using an interactive multimedia program developed specifically for the study.

Making It User Friendly

The aim of the program, according to the researchers, was to teach nurse assistants fundamental skills to calm long term care residents exhibiting behaviors that were either already aggressive (grabbing another resident) or that might escalate into aggression or otherwise endanger that individual or other residents (swinging a cane overhead).

A thorough literature review and telephone interviews with content experts, nurse trainers, and long term care administrators helped the researchers to develop the program, which included scripts, graphic images,



video vignettes, and testimonials. In addition, the researchers utilized a total of 155 Web pages, narrator video clips, voice-over clips, and three supportive nurse assistant video testimonials to produce the interactive program, which rerouted users to review content as part of the criterion-referenced instructional design.

After an initial instruction by a video narrator, the program directed users to move between Web pages by clicking “next” buttons and using radio buttons.

While the authors note that profi-

ciency in typing was not required to use the program, on-screen text in the form of short titles, bulleted lists, questions, and explanations was written at second- to sixth-grade reading levels.

As for the program’s content, video vignettes such as a nurse’s reaction to a resident banging on a door with a water bottle, for example, were supplemented by narration and supportive testimonial.

“With this approach, after content has been presented users can be tested and then automatically rerouted to review content elements related to incorrect test responses,” the authors said.

Positive Response

Post-training evaluations revealed that participants rated the Web site to be helpful and enjoyable, while the response scores indicated they would recommend it to others. Responses about the usability and credibility of the Web site were also very favorable, according to the authors.

Telephone calls to participants, made an average of 16 days after use of the program, resulted in positive comments, such as “nice variety,” “a good refresher,” “very up to date,” and “I used to be scared to get [residents’]

attention when they are mad; I am not anymore.”

Interviewees also suggested that future programs include greater diversity of modeling vignettes, how to deal with very angry residents, more education on dementia, and printouts for later reference, the researchers found.

Problems Addressed

The researchers suggested that addressing the numerous problems with traditional training programs—such as poor quality, limited content, and sporadic attendance by overworked staff—could improve the knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy of mental health staff. “Training can also help nurse assistants feel that their jobs are more rewarding and less frustrating,” they said.

Benefits of the program include its ability to be administered individually with minimal involvement by adminis-

trative staff or to groups of nurse assistants led by a trainer.

“This approach gives a long term care facility the option of providing each new employee with focused training (dementia communication, dealing with aggressive behaviors), which should meet, if not exceed, expectations for best practice standards of care. Thus, the employee’s confidence and skills, as well as resident quality of care, potentially would be enhanced,” the researchers said.

In addition to its effectiveness as a training tool, the researchers noted that the program can be very time efficient. For instance, in previous research, the average use-time to acceptable comprehension for CD-ROM training programs for nurse assistants was about 55 minutes, while the same training material developed in a VHS format for in-services led by a nurse trainer was designed as four

sessions, each lasting at least 45 minutes, for a total of 180 minutes.

“All three formats may be used with a projector for in-services, but only Internet and CD-ROMs provide interactive one-on-one training and data storage capabilities. Internet delivery offers the potential of external hosting and easy updating, plus automated record keeping,” the researchers said. ■

Correction

In a December 2007 article on the interactive nursing home exhibit at the AHCA/NCAL annual convention, featuring Cornerstone Health Care, *Provider* omitted to mention that Enformix, an IT services company, played an integral role in planning, implementing, and managing Cornerstone’s new systems and was a partner in staging the exhibit.