

## PROMOTING SELF-CARE THROUGH NURSING: APPLICATION OF DOROTHEA OREM'S SELF-CARE DEFICIT NURSING THEORY IN STROKE AND DEMENTIA

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### Abstract

Stroke and dementia frequently impair patients' physical, cognitive, and functional abilities, resulting in substantial dependence on nurses and family caregivers for essential self-care activities. This study examines the application of Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory (SCDNT) in promoting self-care and optimizing nursing care for an older patient experiencing acute ischemic stroke, right-sided hemiplegia, and dementia. The objective was to identify the patient's therapeutic self-care demands, determine the extent of self-care deficit, and evaluate the appropriateness of Orem's nursing systems in guiding individualized clinical interventions. A clinical case study approach was employed to assess the patient's physiological condition, functional limitations, activities of daily living, nutritional and hydration needs, medication adherence, mobility, and oral health. Orem's three interrelated theoretical components—Theory of Self-Care, Theory of Self-Care Deficit, and Theory of Nursing Systems—were used to analyze the patient's care requirements and develop an appropriate nursing response. Findings indicated a substantial self-care deficit associated with hemiplegia, cognitive impairment, dysphagia, immobility, and oral thrush, increasing the risks of dehydration, malnutrition, infection, and pressure injuries. The Wholly Compensatory Nursing System was identified as the most appropriate approach because the patient required extensive assistance with feeding, hygiene, toileting, repositioning, medication administration, and oral care. The involvement and education of the patient's daughter further supported continuity of care. The case demonstrates that Orem's theory provides a structured framework for assessing self-care limitations, individualizing nursing interventions, preventing complications, and promoting improved patient outcomes.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Application of Nursing Theory into Practice:**

#### **Dorothea Elizabeth Orem Self-Care Deficit**

#### **Nursing Theory (SCDNT)**

This research paper aims to present a clinical case study and demonstrate how the application of a nursing theory can improve patient care and health outcomes.

### **1. Clinical Scenario**

A 75-year-old female patient was admitted to the medicine ward with a diagnosis of acute ischemic stroke which had left her with right sided hemiplegia. In addition, she had a history of hypertension, type II diabetes mellitus and dementia. Assessment revealed that the patient was totally bedridden and dependent on her daughter for activities of daily living (ADL) including feeding, bathing, oral hygiene, toileting, repositioning and administering medicines. Her vital signs recorded during monitoring were: Blood pressure 140/90 mmHg, Heart rate 82 beats per minute, Breathing rate 18 breaths per minute, Temperature 36.8°C, Oxygen saturation 97% while on air and random blood glucose 200mg/dl. On examination of the mouth, white patches were seen on the tongue and buccal mucosa with a foul mouth odour, typical of oral thrush.

She had difficulty eating and drinking, pain in mouth. This increased the chances that she would become malnourished and dehydrated. Her lack of movement and needing help with care made it more likely for her to get infections, pressure sores and to take longer to recover. Based on these findings, she was unable to care for herself. She required nursing assistance. This is in line with Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory. It, in particular, employs the "Wholly Compensatory Nursing System". The nurse gives assistance to allow the patient to care for himself.

### **Analysis of theory (problem Questions)**

The following clinical questions were developed based on the analysis of the above clinical scenario:

- What patient therapeutic self-care needs were there and why did the patient need nursing responses?
- What type of nursing system is best suited for the patient's case and why, according to Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory?
- How is the patient's recovery and health optimized by applying Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory?

### **2. Overview of Dorothea Elizabeth Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory (SCDNT)**

The Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory was created by Dorothea Elizabeth Orem in 1971. This theory explains that people require nursing assistance when they are unable to care for themselves because of illness. It can be applied in various health care settings and explains when individuals need help with self-care. The theory includes five key concepts: self-care, self-care agency, therapeutic self-care demand, self-care deficit, and nursing agency. Self-care refers to activities people perform to maintain health and well-being. Self-care agency is a person's ability to perform these activities, while therapeutic self-care demand includes all actions required to meet health needs. When self-care demands exceed a person's ability, a self-care deficit occurs and nursing intervention is required. Nursing agency is the nurse's ability to assess these deficits and provide appropriate care. According to Orem (2001), SCDNT consists of three related theories: the Theory of Self-Care, the Theory of Self-Care Deficit, and the Theory of Nursing Systems. The Theory of Self-Care focuses on maintaining health through self-care activities. The Theory of Self-Care Deficit explains when nursing care is needed, while the Theory of Nursing Systems determines the level of nursing assistance required according to the person's self-care ability (Orem, 2001; Basavanthappa, 2007; McEwen & Wills, 2023).

Orem's theory focuses on the concepts of person, health, environment, and nursing. When a person's ability to meet self-care needs is reduced, nurses provide appropriate care to meet those needs, prevent complications, and promote better health outcomes.

### **3. Analysis the clinical scenario by Applying Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory (SCDNT)**

The patient should look after himself in drinking sufficient amount of water and proper food. She has to learn how to brush her teeth, walk or get around. The patient must also adhere to her medical regimen and not fall ill. She suffered a stroke causing weakness on one side of her body, and she has difficulty swallowing. Patient is also demented. She has a difficult time thinking straight. All of these issues make it difficult for the patient to take care of herself. She even developed an infection, in her mouth which made it difficult for her to eat and drink. This increased the likelihood that she will not be able to obtain food and water. So it is clear that the patient needs a lot of help from nurses to take care of her. According to Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory the Wholly Compensatory Nursing System was the choice, for this patient because she needed help with everything related to self-care. The nurse took charge of giving oral care helping with eating keeping her clean moving her around giving medicine and stopping any problems from happening. The patient's daughter also became someone who helped with care after learning about mouth cleaning, food and moving the patient around.

The use of Orem's theory was helpful in determining what the patient was not able to do for himself. It facilitated determination of the degree of assistance required by the nurses. It was also used to develop care plans for each patient. Using this theory made nursing care more organized. It turned this care into a care of the patient. It also made the care more about the improvement of the patient. It also included

attention to the care to prevent issues from arising.

### **4. Hypothesis**

When the patient's self-care needs are applied to Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory, the provision of structured nursing care for oral hygiene, nutrition, mobility, repositioning and personal care will be helpful in meeting the patient's self-care needs, minimizing preventable complications, and enhance patient health outcomes.

### **5. Discussion**

In this context, the application of Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory demonstrates that nursing theory provides a means of decision making in healthcare settings, and contributes to improving patients care. Because of an ischemic stroke, dementia, dysphagia and right-sided weakness the patient had a big problem, with self-care and needed full help with daily tasks. She couldn't have her mouth clean, she ate less. She was in the same spot for too long. The result of these problems was a risk of not eating enough, dehydration and other issues that could have been prevented, which led to the occurrence of thrush.

I applied Orem's theory to determine what the patient was able to do to take care of himself/herself and what additional help was needed. This made me understand that the patient required a lot of care. Therefore, I opted for Wholly Compensatory Nursing System, where the patient gets all she needs in nursing. The nurses helped the patient with bathing, for example and also with dressing and caring for their mouth. They also made sure the patient was eating well and moving around and changing positions, in bed. The nurses administered the patient's medication. Tried to prevent any problems from happening.

All these were assisted to the patient, as they are necessary for the patient as per the Orem's theory and Wholly Compensatory Nursing System. Through this experience with the patient, it's just

very crucial to have the patient's family to care for the patient. The daughter of the patient was informed about the care of patient's oral hygiene, good nutrition, and how to move the patient. This will aid the patient to receive the care the patient needs upon discharge.

According to Orem's theory, a Nurse provides care for the patients' needs and also a Nurse cares for the patient as a whole person. This experience with the patient shows that using nursing theory, in life helps nurses make good decisions and take good care of the patient. It also assists the patient to improve and come to an end. It is important for the nurse to know about and use Orem's theory when providing care for patients in the care setting, and also the Wholly Compensatory Nursing System.

## 6. Reflection

I have learned a lot from this assignment about how important it's to use nursing theories when I am taking care of patients. It helped me identify with Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory when I noticed that nursing care is not about doing something, but it is about checking the patient to understand what he can and cannot do, what he needs help with and providing him the right care to support him.

When I looked at this situation, I learned that when the nurse can see that the patient has difficulties in taking care of himself or nurse can come up with a plan to help the patient and to prevent the situation from occurring. Another thing I learned is that it's an idea to include the patient's family with them and educate the family on how to assist the patient if they can't do it themselves.

This exercise was very eye opening for me to understand the theory that I have learned can be applied to patient care. To determine what patients need, I will use nursing theories such as Dorothea Orem Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory to help me determine this, then create a care plan to provide this care and ensure that it is provided if possible. Nurses should use nursing theories to

guide nursing decisions in caring for patients and ensure safe and complete patient care.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Dorothea Orem's self-care deficit theory provides a foundation for determining patient needs, identifying their self-care deficits and planning effective nursing interventions. In this clinical scenario, the wholly compensatory Nursing System help the nurse go meet patients care demands while involving the family in patient's care. By applying Orem's theory, nursing care can be delivered in a more organized manner, leading to improve patient outcomes. This case emphasizes the importance of utilizing nursing theories to guide evidence-based clinical practice.

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