



Determining emergency physicians' and nurses' views concerning older patients: a mixed-method study

Hulya Bulut RN, PhD (Associate Professor)^a, Gulay Yazici RN, MsN (Research Assistant)^b,
Ahmet Demircan MD (Associate Professor)^c, Ayfer Keles MD (Associate Professor)^c,
Sevil Guler Demir RN, PhD (Instructor)^{a,*}

^a Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Gazi University, Besevler, Ankara, Turkey

^b Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Yasamkent, Ankara, Turkey

^c Department of Emergency Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Gazi University, Besevler, Ankara, Turkey

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 7 February 2014

Received in revised form 31 July 2014

Accepted 2 August 2014

Keywords:

Emergency department

Older patient

Emergency nursing

Emergency physician

Focus groups

ABSTRACT

The number of elderly patients presenting to emergency services is gradually increasing. Given that the needs of older patients differ from those of other patients, the quality of emergency care for this patient group also varies. This mixed-method study aimed to reveal the views of emergency service staff concerning ageing and elderly patients. Participants were 19 physicians and 17 nurses employed by the adult emergency service of a university hospital. Data were gathered using questionnaires and focus group interviews. Frequency and percentages were used to evaluate quantitative data. Open-ended questions used to gather quantitative data were analysed using thematic analysis and four themes (including understanding older patients' situations, good nursing care and medical treatment, affecting good nursing care and medical treatment, emotions experienced) were determined. Emergency department staff identified older patients as dependent individuals requiring health care. Nurses indicated that good care for older patients included ensuring that their physical, social, and psychological needs were met; whereas, physicians identified good treatment as improving the quality of life. Impediments to the care and treatment of older patients were identified as staff shortages, emergency service crowding, and lack of proper training for emergency department staff. Emergency department staff also indicated that they experienced weariness and exhaustion while providing health care for older patients. Emergency nurses and physicians were aware of older patients and their needs but experienced difficulties regarding patient density, physical settings, staff shortages, and a lack of training.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Presently, due to disease prevention, provision of early diagnosis and treatment opportunities, and progress and improvements in health care, living standards have improved and life expectancy has increased, leading to an ageing worldwide population. The population of older individuals in Turkey has also increased in parallel with improvements in standards of living.

The 2013 Turkish address-based population census results revealed that approximately 7.7% (5,891,694) of the total population of 76,667,864 consisted of individuals aged 65 years and older (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2014). Ageing is considered a normal process, but it involves a number of physiological and anatomical

changes. Based on these changes, numerous health problems occur in older individuals. Therefore, elderly individuals attend hospitals more often and are frequently hospitalized and treated. The increase of the elderly population in Turkey has an impact on the utilization and cost of health care services. In the study of Satar et al. (2004), 59.35% of patients requiring emergency medical services were hospitalized and 70.4% of hospitalized patients were admitted to intensive care units. Another study found that 61% of the patients who required emergency services were hospitalized (Kekec et al., 2009). Based on our observations, the majority of patients attending emergency departments remain there for treatment, as there are no beds available in other hospital departments.

The number of older individuals presenting to emergency services has increased significantly due to the gradual growth of the older population and greater prevalence of chronic diseases (Aminzadeh and Dalziel, 2002; Bulut et al., 2003; Burns, 2001; Satar et al., 2004; Singal et al., 1992; Unsal et al., 2003; Wofford et al., 1993). Kılıçaslan et al. (2005) reported that among patients in triage group 1 (very urgent) in their study, 37.1% were aged at least 65 years.

Sources of support: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +90 312 216 26 25; fax: +90 312 216 26 36.

E-mail address: sevilgulerdemir@yahoo.com (S. Guler Demir).

In another study, patients aged 75 years or older constituted the largest proportion of the total study population (29.5%, $n = 178$), and 52.4% ($n = 316$) of the monitored patients were aged at least 65 years (Mahsanlar et al., 2014). The results of these studies indicated that geriatric patients constituted a major proportion of the patients who required monitored observation.

Given that physiological, psychological, and social needs of older individuals differ from those of other patient groups, the quality of emergency care for this particular patient group also varies. The differences between geriatric and other patient groups can be summarized as follows. Such patients often present with atypical signs and symptoms and multiple comorbidities, which complicate diagnosis and treatment. They are at an increased risk of return visits to emergency departments, hospitalization, and death. Furthermore, outcomes may be partly related to issues such as functional status, comorbidity score, age, social supports, polypharmacy, cognitive impairment, and depression (Samaras et al., 2010). Moreover, emergency department staff should be knowledgeable and aware regarding the treatment and care of older individuals. The views held by health care personnel regarding older individuals affect the treatment and care they provide. Elderly individuals are valued in Turkish culture; this approach is beneficial with respect to the provision of health care services for geriatric patients. Previous studies have determined that Turkish doctors and nurses act with a more positive attitude towards elderly individuals relative to similar professionals in other cultures (Gözüm and Tan, 2003; Ögenler et al., 2012). This study aimed to determine the views of emergency service staff concerning ageing and older patients who present to emergency services with acute or chronic complaints.

2. Methods

2.1. The study design

This was designed as a mixed-method study.

2.2. Setting and participants

The study was conducted in the adult emergency service of the Gazi University Health Research and Practice Center between July and December 2010. During this time, 52,431 adult patients presented to the emergency service, of whom 10,639 (20.3%) were aged 65 years or older. During the duration of the study, 19 physicians and 17 nurses worked in shifts at the emergency department, all of whom agreed to participate in the study.

There were no exclusion criteria. The inclusion criterion was that physicians and nurses should have had at least 1 year of professional experience.

2.3. Data collection and focus group interviews

The study was conducted between July and December 2010. The objective was explained to the physicians and nurses, and their verbal consent to participate was obtained. Data were collected via semi-structured questionnaires, comprising six open-ended questions and prepared in light of related literature enquiries and focus group interview techniques based on the same questions. Questionnaires were completed by all participants. Following analysis of the questionnaire data, two focus group interviews (one group of 11 physicians and one group of seven nurses) were conducted to obtain further information, ensuring interaction between group members. Four themes were determined based on the findings derived from the quantitative data, and focus group interviews were conducted accordingly.

Focus group interviews were conducted by the researchers and performed in quiet settings in the hospital. Data collection was

initiated with the open-ended questions: 'In your opinion, who are **older patients**?' and 'Which **characteristics** differentiate older patients from other patients?' These were followed by 'What comes to your mind when there is mention of **good nursing care/good medical treatment** in geriatric patients', 'What are the **factors/obstacles** influencing good nursing care/good medical treatment', and 'What are your **feelings** towards older patients?' All interviews with physicians and nurses were recorded by using a tape recorder and documented in written format, and printouts of each interview transcript were gathered. These documents were compared against the interview records and analysed. Each focus group interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes.

2.4. Data analysis

Frequency and percentages were used in the statistical evaluation of quantitative data. Open-ended questions used to gather quantitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Four themes were determined:

1. Understanding older patients' situations
2. Good nursing care and medical treatment
3. Affecting good nursing care and medical treatment
4. Emotions experienced

The specific views of the emergency service nurses and physicians in the study were identified through the numbers assigned to participants.

2.5. Ethical considerations

The Gazi University Health Research and Practice Center did not have an ethics committee at the time of this research. Prior to the initiation of the study, written consent to conduct the study was obtained from the Gazi University Health Research and Practice Center (Date: 06.07.2009/Number: 1635). To ensure ethical clarity, all emergency service staff members (physicians and nurses) were fully informed of the nature and purpose of the study, and the voluntary nature of their participation was emphasized. All emergency service staff agreed to participate in the study voluntarily; therefore, their informed consents were obtained in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

3. Results

3.1. Sociodemographic characteristics of emergency nurses and physicians

Of the emergency service staff who participated in the study, 52.8% were physicians and 42.1% were nurses (female: 58.3%). The average ages of the physicians and nurses were 30.78 ± 4.4 and 28.23 ± 3.3 respectively. Physicians and nurses had worked in their respective professions for 5.68 ± 4.7 and 6.11 ± 4.1 years and in the emergency service for 3.21 ± 2 and 4.82 ± 3.5 years on average, respectively. The participants stated that they had not received training regarding older individuals and their care but required such training.

3.2. Understanding older patients' situations

The participants felt that understanding and insight regarding the characteristics of older patients were important. Nurses and physicians described the **older patient** as a person who is aged over 65 years and in need of care, with limited or altered physical, psychological, and social skills. Some examples of nurses' and physicians' views on this subject are listed below:

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/2609365>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/2609365>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)