
Book review

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Home Care: Patient and Family Instructions, by Deborah K. Zastocki, RN, MA, EdM, and Christine A. Rovinski, RN, MSN. 1989, W.B. Saunders Company. The Curtis Center, Independence Square West, Philadelphia, PA 19106. 384 pages. \$36.95.

Home Care: Patient and Family Instructions represents a new concept in home health care teaching materials in that it is a collection of patient teaching guides. The guides can be reproduced and given to patients and families.

Documentation of teaching is necessary both for reimbursement and for continuity of patient care. As the authors state, "Much of the time spent in a patient's home involves teaching, despite the fact that teaching, for the most part, is not reimbursable. By providing the professional nurse with a ready to use tool the preparation time needed for the teaching component of the

home visit can be reduced." Also, by using standardized teaching guides the nurse clearly knows what the patient or family has been taught and can elaborate on or review the material as needed. In addition to saving the nurse time, the book can improve the quality of patient teaching.

The book is divided into two sections. The first section reviews the teaching learning process, presents a theoretic framework for teaching adults, and discusses the essential elements of effective documentation of teaching. This section is brief but covers the subject of patient teaching adequately. An excellent bibliography is included.

The second section consists of teaching guides for 15 different health status alterations. On each of the teaching guides there is space for the nurse to personalize the format for specific patients. The first unit in the second section presents teaching guides for cardiovascular alterations. This unit includes guides for patients after a heart attack, with angina, and with a pacemaker as well as instructions for taking a pulse and information about what makes a

healthy heart. Each of the one-page teaching guides offers suggestions for living with the alteration and describes symptoms that should be reported to the physician at once.

Some of the health status alterations, such as respiratory alterations, have 8 to 10 teaching guides; others, such as end stage of life, have only one guide. For this particular alteration several other guides would have been appropriate, such as what to do when the patient dies, directions for care of the body, and who must be notified of the death. Some mental health content could also have been included, such as how to deal with the death in the home. There is a unit on mental health alterations, but the only categories identified are reality orientation and when to call for help. The latter guide is supposed to help the family know when to call for assistance with a family member who is mentally ill, but the questions posed are so general that anyone with a mental illness would manifest most of the symptoms.

The unit on elimination alterations covers urostomy care, colostomy care, continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis, and constipation. The guide for constipation is brief and suggests the simple solutions of drinking more, eating more fiber, and getting more exercise. Because constipation is one of the major concerns for many home health care clients, a more comprehensive guide is needed. Bowel training, use of stool softener, and natural laxatives are some of the areas that need to be addressed.

The unit on digestive alterations is the most extensive. A total of 30 guides are included; these cover many special diets such as soft, gluten free, fat restricted, and bland. Perhaps the authors need not have

devoted so much of the book to this area because many teaching guides are already available from many sources on this topic. Also included in this unit are guidelines for breast feeding and suggestions for common problems associated with breast feeding, such as sore nipples and breast engorgement.

A unit on viral and communicable disease includes guidelines for the patient with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). This guide is not specific as to what precautions are needed for these patients but instead presents a general list of factors that increase the risk of infection. Some of the suggestions, such as laundering AIDS patients' clothes and linens separately, are questionable. Additional guides for comfort measures, emotional issues, and care for specific complications would have been useful.

The appendix includes full-page illustrations of the eye, ear, nose, throat, larynx, bronchial tree and lungs, heart, gastrointestinal tract, urinary tract, female and male genitalia, and skeletal system. These can be used to draw or describe specific problems, surgeries, or medication administration.

Overall, this book is a useful collection of teaching guides that should assist the nurse in teaching patients and families about their health conditions. Although some of the guides could be developed further, the idea of having guidelines available for many of the common problems identified in home health care is appealing. The price of the book is reasonable considering that the material can be copied for patients and families as well as included in the patient's chart for documentation of teaching.