Multidisciplinary integrated care of COPD patients with Korsakoff syndrome in a long-term care facility; a project design

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Background

Korsakoff syndrome (KS) is characterized by severe deficits in long-term explicit memory and is often associated with confabulation. Commonly, executive functioning is also impaired. Next to these problems patients have often somatic and psychiatric comorbidity. In particular, many patients suffer from COPD due to excessive smoking. Atlant Care Group offers multidisciplinary care to 138 KS patients residing in 5 Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF). Ninety per cent of these patients smoke, and the prevalence of COPD is estimated at 23-30%. COPD is also associated with impairments in executive functioning and factors such as diet and sleep. Integrated care i.e. medical treatment, decreasing smoking, sufficient physical activity and healthy diet seems essential in treating COPD. However, little is known about these aspects in KS patients.

Atlant Care Group is preparing a multidisciplinary project to create optimal integrated care and treatment, aimed at improving somatic and psychic condition. This may improve quality of life of KS patients with COPD.

Methods

Four working groups will be established (figure 1). During 2016 – 2017 each working group identifies the current and ideal daily practice, resulting in a plan of action and study protocol.

Intended results

1. Multidisciplinary protocol ‘Integrated care of COPD for KS patients’
2. Guideline for professional caregivers ‘supporting KS patients to decrease or stop smoking’
3. Education program for professional caregivers: e.g., knowledge, motivational skills, and supervision
4. Optimized ‘non-smoking’ policy
5. Future research projects.

Discussion

We face the following challenges: the influence of the characteristics and impairments in executive functioning, and the impaired awareness of KS patients with COPD; the skills of professional caregivers in supporting patients in decreasing smoking and increasing physical activities; ethical and legal aspects regarding physical integrity.

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