in the critical care setting

Animal-assisted therapy

Keywords: animal-assisted therapy, critical care, human-animal interactions,

Abstract: Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is an emerging field that involves the use of animals to provide emotional, psychological, and physical benefits to patients in healthcare settings. AAT is often used in critical care units to improve patient outcomes, reduce stress, and enhance the healing process. This article explores the role of animals in critical care environments and discusses the various benefits that AAT can offer to patients. It also highlights the importance of proper training and certification for animal handlers and the need for guidelines to ensure the ethical and effective use of AAT in critical care settings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Study purpose</th>
<th>Sample and sample size</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coakley &amp; colleagues, 2004</td>
<td>Determine whether inpatient therapy interventions with non-protective measures associated with behavioral, and resulting functional outcomes of hospitalized patients.</td>
<td>N = 59</td>
<td>Pretest-posttest experimental with matched case-control</td>
<td>Significant decrease in respirator requirement, pain, and concomitant symptoms. No differences in hospital length of stay, resuscitation rate, and readmission rate. No significant differences in oxygen therapy requirement or methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infection rates.</td>
<td>Small number of subjects, short time between pre and post collection. Details limited to 2-3 days per week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of literature review**

- **Study purpose**: Determine whether inpatient therapy interventions with non-protective measures associated with behavioral, and resulting functional outcomes of hospitalized patients.
- **Sample and sample size**: N = 59, N = 120, N = 150.
- **Design**: Pretest-posttest experimental with matched case-control, Quasi-experimental, Longitudinal.
- **Findings**: Significant decrease in respirator requirement, pain, and concomitant symptoms. No differences in hospital length of stay, resuscitation rate, and readmission rate. No significant differences in oxygen therapy requirement or MRSA infection rates.
- **Limitations**: Small number of subjects, short time between pre and post collection. Details limited to 2-3 days per week. Lack of control group. Insufficient sample size.

**AAT/AAA guidelines and policies**

It is necessary to weigh the benefits of AAT/AAA with the risks. Regardless of the care setting, to prevent infections, AAT/AAA in hospitals must include guidelines and policies for the prevention of infections. These policies should include guidelines for the use of AAT/AAA in hospitals, adherence to specific guidelines, and implementation of any AAT/AAA program. In general, hospitals must consider developing policies that include guidelines for the use of AAT/AAA. These policies can be made available to all hospital staff, including nurses, physicians, and other healthcare providers. The policies should be reviewed regularly and modified as needed.
Annual staff training on AAT programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Step)</th>
<th>Questions to ask</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Why should staff be trained on AAT programs?</td>
<td>Who will be most effective in delivering the program?</td>
<td>How will AAT training be conducted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are the key components of an AAT program?</td>
<td>How will the program be implemented?</td>
<td>How will the program be evaluated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How will the program be evaluated?</td>
<td>How will the program be maintained?</td>
<td>How will the program be sustained?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation of AAT programs

- Identify objectives
- Design a protocol
- Develop the program
- Implement the program
- Evaluate the program
- Maintain and improve the program

Policies and procedures

- Policies and procedures for handling, restraining, and transporting animals
- Policies and procedures for monitoring and reporting adverse outcomes
- Policies and procedures for ensuring the welfare of animals

Summary

Hospital staff training on AAT programs is important. It is important to know the benefits and risks of AAT programs and to ensure that the staff is well-prepared and educated about the program before initiating it. It is also important to ensure that the program is well-planned and implemented effectively.

References