Increasing Oncology Medical-Surgical Nurses' Self-Efficacy in Suicide Prevention with Veterans

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Intro & Background

Nearly 18 veterans die by suicide each day. Nurses are in a unique position to address and prevent suicide, but some lack confidence and expertise in suicide prevention, and want training to manage suicidal patients.

Purpose & Aims

This quality improvement project's purpose was to evaluate the effect of a suicide prevention and risk management program. The project aims were to increase (a) nurse self-efficacy to manage risk, (b) suicide screening completion, and (c) follow-up referral rates.

Intervention

One-hour, in-person training on a computerized screening and referral algorithm, plus group role-play of therapeutic responses to suicide scenarios.

Methods

Design: One-group, pre/posttest intervention design set at oncology med-surg unit.
Sample: 34 VA nurses, 22 pre- and 22 post-intervention chart audits.
Measures: (a) 18-item Risk Assessment and Management Self-Efficacy Scale (RAMSES) & (b) Protocol completion and (c) Referral rates. No demographics were collected.
Analysis: Descriptive stats, Mann Whitney-U.

Aim 1 Results

Aim 1. Nurse participants showed statistically significant increases in all self-efficacy subscales, which were large statistical effects. See Table 1 below.

Table 1. Nurse Self-efficacy Results

RAMSES Subscale	Pre Median	Post Median	% Δ
Assessment*	7	9.2	+31%
Management*	6.4	9	+41%
Referral*	5.9	9.1	+56%

*$p <.05$

Aim 2 & 3 Results

Aim 2. There was no change in completed screenings pre- and post-intervention. Both phases had an 86% completion rate. See Figure 1.
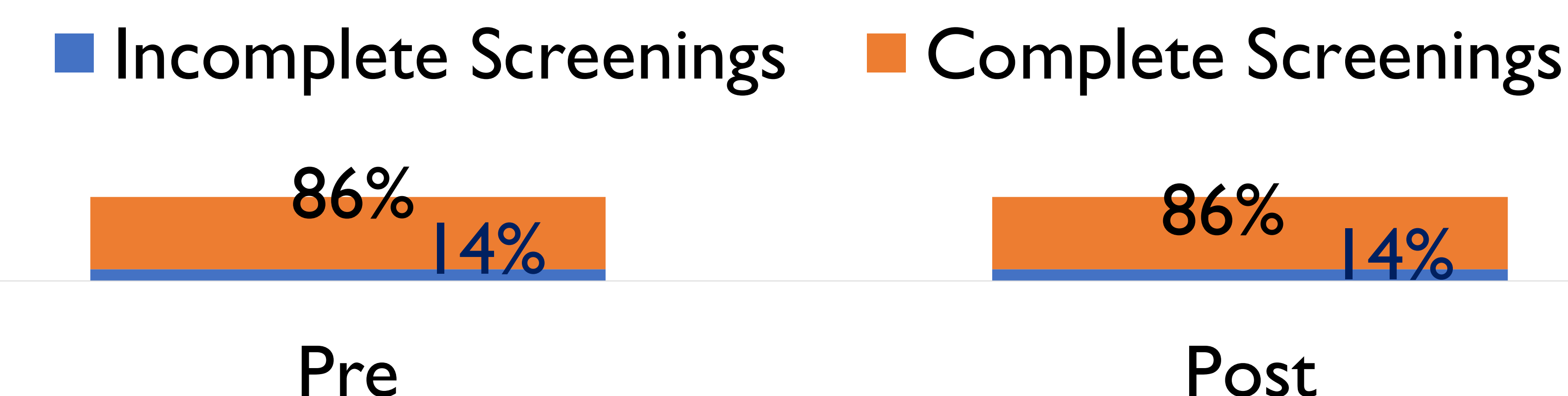

Figure 1. Suicide Screening Completion Rates

Aim 3. No change in follow-up referral rates because no post-intervention patients required. follow-up referrals.

Conclusion

Evidence-based suicide prevention education strategies increase self-efficacy to assess, manage, and make referrals for veterans at risk of suicide for nurses in medical inpatient settings.

Discussion

It is imperative that nurses working with veterans are armed with evidence-based suicide prevention strategies to protect our nation's veterans from the tragic outcome of suicide.