Concept Application: # 2 – Pneumonia in Older People

Definition: Pneumonia is a common infection in people with all different ages. It is the infection of lung, in which the alveoli become inflamed and flooded with fluid.

Signs and Symptoms: Signs and symptoms of pneumonia include: cough, greenish or yellow sputum, fever and chill, short of breathing. In older people, signs and symptoms of infection might different from the typical signs and symptoms of infection. They may appear as changes mental status, falls, agitation, changed functional ability, malaise or feeling weak, confusion, pain in the chest, etc.

Etiology: Pneumonia can be resulted from a variety of causes, such as infection with bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites. It can also caused by injury to the lungs. It includes community-acquired pneumonia and nosocomial-acquired pneumonia.

Incidence: The incidence of pneumonia in older people is high. It is a leading cause of death among the elderly and people who are chronically ill.

Major Recommendation of Pertinent Guideline/Position Statements: Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has the guideline for prevention of nosocomial pneumonia, please see http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr4601.pdf.

Implication for APN: As a gerontological CNS, the primary prevention for pneumonia is particularly important. Help the elderly recognize the importance of pneumonia vaccination, and offer them vaccination is the key to prevent pneumonia in the elderly. To recognize the signs and symptoms of the pneumonia and initialize the treatment is essential for the secondary prevention. To prevent pneumonia caused complication is very important since pneumonia is one of the leading causes of the death in the elderly.
Concept Application: # 2 – Management of Pneumonia in the Older Patients

Websites providing the guidelines of treatment/prevention of pneumonia:


Articles about the management of respiratory tract infections in the older people:

Bonomo, R. A. Resistant pathogens in respiratory tract infection in older people. Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. 50(57), 236-241. This article explores the problem of accurate diagnosis of respiratory tract infection due to lack of signs and symptoms of infection in the older people. It also discusses the optimal treatment of infection for the older patients.

This article provides the guideline for health care for the older residents with infection at the long-term care facilities based on the clinical evidences.


Takeyoshi, Y. (2004). Oral care reduces pneumonia in older patients. *Geriatrics and Gerontology International, 4*(S1), S165-S166. This study shows that good oral care in the older people can help to reduce pneumonia.

**Assessment Tools:**

[Infection Management Algorithm](#)