

Incontinence, a neglected problem:

How can we get better? A systematic nursing approach

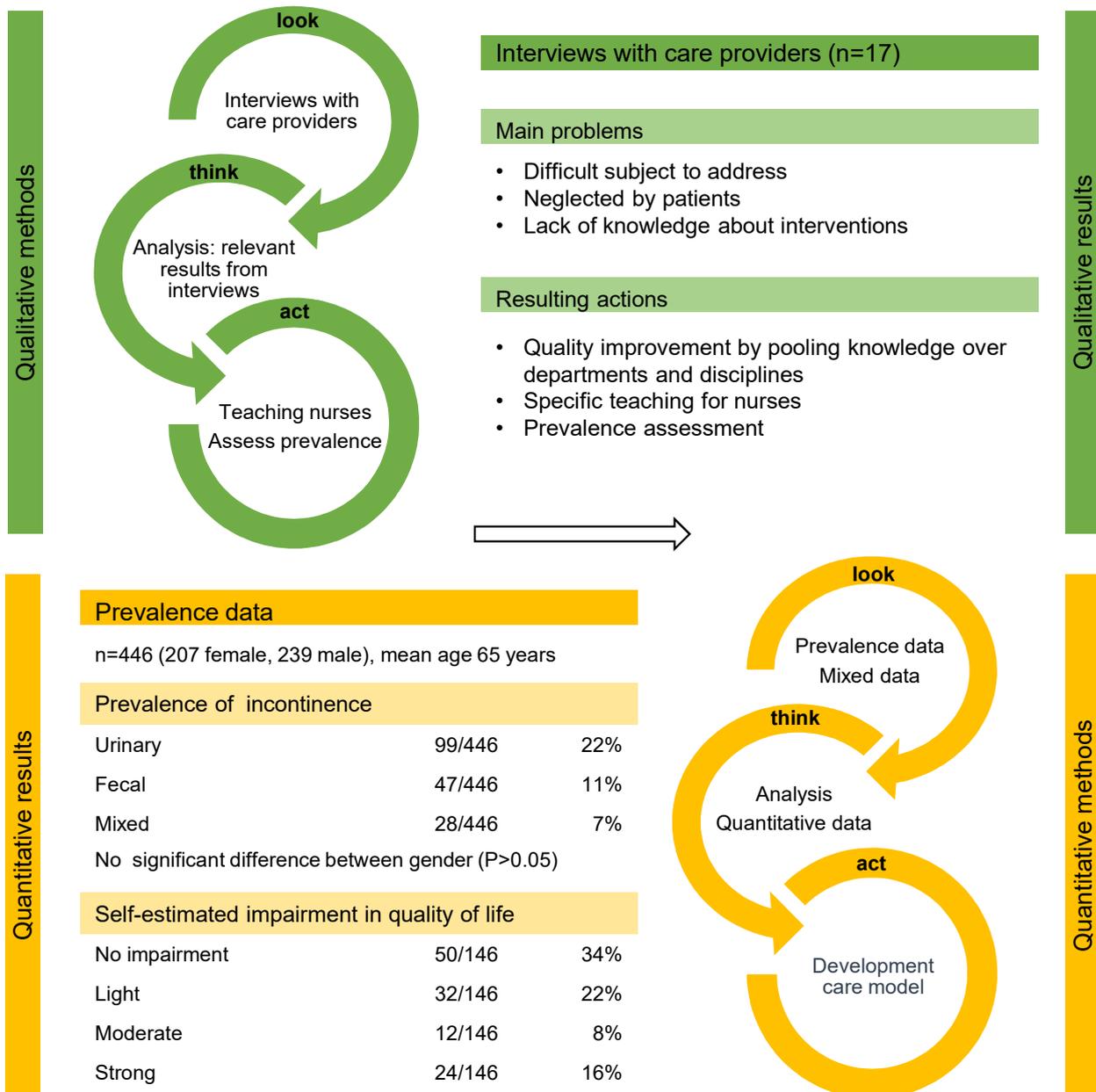
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Introduction & Objectives

Urinary and fecal incontinence are highly prevalent, impair patient's health related quality of life and cause a relevant economic burden. Though, about half of the affected patients do not seek professional help whereby misinterpretation of symptoms, misbeliefs in successful treatments and shame are common reasons. A hospital stay may be an opportunity to identify incontinence and offer appropriate information about possible management. Therefore, our aim was to evaluate the current model of care and to assess the prevalence of incontinence to determine a baseline for improvements.

Methods and Results

Action research¹ was used to gain knowledge out of practice for the practice.



Conclusions

Incontinence was highly prevalent and the results comparable with similar hospitals in other developed countries. Specific training and a systematic approach enhance the competence and awareness of health professionals and enable patients to find help. Therefore, we emphasise that a hospital stay is an opportunity to systematically identify incontinent patients and offer appropriate information by an interprofessional health care team about this relevant but often neglected burden.