Reducing Agitation in Dementia Patients
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Introduction
- Approximately 60-70% of the adult population, 85+ has dementia (ASHA, 2020).
- Majority of dementia patients reside in nursing homes (ASHA, 2020).
- Approximately 50% of dementia patients experience agitation.
- Agitation can manifest neuropsychiatric behaviors. Patients can:
  - become suicidal and homicidal
  - become verbally and physically abusive
  - confused and sudden change in personality
- These behaviors are very dangerous and they can cause harm to healthcare staff.
- Agitation increases morbidity and mortality rate.

Background
- Confusion, depression, and stress
- Pain
- Disturbed Sleep Cycle
- Constipation
- Unfamiliar Setting
- Bright lights or color

Alternative Therapies to Reduce Agitation

Environmental Factors:
- **Light therapy** can be used to help patients sleep better
  - Blue light therapy during the winters can help with maintaining a normal sleep schedule
- **Consistent Temperature** can help the patient stay calm without getting irritated from extreme temperature changes.
  - WHO recommends 20°C for the elder population.
- **Use a neutral color palette** when selecting wall colors or clothes.
  - Bright colors can be a bit harsh on the eyes.

Wander garden
- Provides security and allow patients to connect with nature.
- This can also be sued in conjunction with image guided therapy to provide a calming effect.

Spatial Configuration:
- Adjusting a room to a patient’s preference while maintaining a safety can reduce confusion.
- It can provide more familiar feeling.

Aromatherapy:
- Provides calming effect
- Use in conjunction with massage to relax the patient.

Music Therapy
- Patients can find music of their choice to be relaxing and encourage patients to interact with other people.

Doll Therapy:
- Patients with dementia look for a parent figure, which can cause them anxiety and frustration.
- Doll therapy helps patients feel relief which may decrease the use of antipsychotics.

Robotic Pet Therapy
- Decreased perception of pain and the use of antipsychotics.
- Caregivers do not have to take on the responsibilities of pet along with the patient.

Daily Routine:
- Having a structured daily routine can decrease confusion in dementia patients.
- Following through tasks in a certain order can relieve agitation.

References: