Experiential Session on the Aging Process: Understanding What is Normal/Expected

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Multidimensional Aspects of Aging

How We Live Now

PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Skin thins

Watch for tears when moving patients

Look for skin breakdown

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Care with transfers

Special tape may be needed

Use pull sheet and lift, not drag
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Sweat glands diminish

Dry skin

Monitor temperature

Patient may complain of itching

Less frequent bathing may be indicated

Cleanse off soap
PHYSICAL
CHANGES IN
THE SYSTEM

WHAT
OBSERVATIONS
TO MAKE

IMPLICATIONS
FOR THE
CNA/PCA

Loss of blood supply to skin

Skin that is cool to touch

Loss of hair on lower extremities

Mottling or color changes in skin

Evidence of skin breakdown

Once skin breaks it takes longer to heal
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Loss of fat

Redness over bony areas

Patient complains of cold more often

May need extra clothing for better insulation
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Nails thicken and turn yellow

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Thickening and length of nails cause problems in walking
Monitor for pain, redness, swelling in nails
Keep nails clean and dry
Clean socks (cotton preferable)
Proper footwear
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Rib cage thickens

Difficulty in breathing signs

Barrel chest appearance

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Breathing effort harder in a supine position
Breathing muscles weaken

- Patient pausing more often while walking, rate of breathing, pattern of breathing change
- Wheezing or rattles
- Patient complains of dyspnea
- Cough

Allow rest periods between periods of exertion
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Breathing problems
Swelling

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Heart valves get thicker
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Pacemaker gets thicker

Irregular pulse rate

Weaker pulses

Patient complaints of flutters or dizziness

Check pulse for pattern

Checky symmetry of pulse points, volume, and amplitude
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Vessels get thicker and more twisted

Blood pressure fluctuations

Gap between the systolic and diastolic pressure widens

Patient may complain of chest discomfort

Be familiar with patient’s baseline blood pressure readings

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Pump up the cuff sufficiently to obtain accurate blood pressure readings
 PHYSICAL
CHANGES IN
THE SYSTEM

What
Observations
To Make

Baroreceptors less sensitive

Dizzy with changing position

Blood pressure drops when changing position (report a change of anything over 10 mm hg)

Observe for falls and near falls

Implications
For The
CNA/PCA

Use proper technique to check positional blood pressure (take in one position, have the patient change position, wait 1-2 min and take the BP)

Change position slowly: dangle first and stabilize
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Dental enamel thins

Loss of shine to teeth

Tooth decay, redness of gums

Missing teeth

Patients complain of dental discomfort

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Frequent oral hygiene
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Gums recede

More of tooth is visible

Gums red or tender

Swelling

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Frequent oral hygiene
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Esophagus tightens

Trouble with swallowing

Patient may choke

Proper food consistency

Elevate head during eating and for 10 minutes after

Be familiar with Heimlich maneuver
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

- Changes in bowel habits: constipation or diarrhea
- Change in the pattern of elimination
- Stomach pain

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

- Make sure patient is taking fluids as directed, exercised as directed, and eating the diet as prescribed

Muscles weaken
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Saliva is less

Trouble with chewing and eating solid foods

Prone to choking

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

May need some liquid during solid intake
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<td>Less kidney cells</td>
<td>Change in urine amount, color, and odor</td>
<td>Maintain a voiding schedule with the high risk patient (i.e., cognitively impaired)</td>
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<td>Assure adequate intake of fluids as directed</td>
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PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

LESS BLADDER TONE AND AMOUNT OF URINE TO FILL THE BLADDER

INCONTINENCE OF URINE: Dribbling, wetting self with cough or sneezing, wetting often but in small amounts

MAINTAIN A VOIDING SCHEDULE FOR THE HIGH RISK PATIENT

ADEQUATE FLUID INTAKE AS PRESCRIBED

AVOID USING INCONTINENCE BRIEFS AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR A VOIDING SCHEDULE

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

 Loss of hormone

 Vagina area is more dry and prone to bleeding

 May have pain with intercourse

 Gait problems

 BONES GET MORE BRITTLE, MORE PRONE TO Fracture WITH FALLS

 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

 Assure adequate perineal care
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

- Men may have difficulty passing urine (urgency, frequency, hesitancy)
- Distended perineal area
- Report changes in color, odor, quality, quantity of urine output

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

- Maintain a voiding schedule with the high risk patient
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

- Smaller in size
- Muscles weaken
- Gait problems
- Changes in range of motion
- Pain with joint or muscle movement

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

- Assure range of motion exercises as performed as directed
- Exercise the patient as prescribed

Loss of muscle and bone
Loss of nerve cells

Fluctuations in mental status (alteration in consciousness, disorganized thinking, short attention span, rambling incoherent speech)

Be alert to balance or gait problems

Report any changes in sensation in the lower extremities and redness or lesions

Sensation may be impaired

Slower to respond

Longer to rehabilitate
Changes in sleep

Changes in the sleep wake cycle: i.e., sleeping less or more, early morning awakening, confusion upon awakening

Help to facilitate sleep in patients: i.e., minimize disruptions

Offer backrub to sleep or warm fluids (avoiding caffeine) as indicated
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Visual problems

Changes in ability to see or balance using side vision

Unable to see in certain positions

Halos or flashes

Difficulty going from light to dark room

Ask the patient if he/she wears glasses, provide these making sure the lens is clean

Keep a night light on in the room

Avoid glare

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Hearing problems

Changes in the ability to hear or balance

Ignoring you

Reporting that people are talking about them

Patient’s complaints of fullness, pain or pressure in the ears

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Ask if the patient wears a hearing aid and make sure that it works and encourage the patient to use it.
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

Sensation problems

Changes in the ability to feel pain or touch something

Changes in the sense of thirst

Dryness of the mouth and/or skin

Redness or evidence of breakdown

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Provide proper footwear

Check water temperature carefully prior to bathing
PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

WHAT OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CNA/PCA

Changes in smell and taste

Does not recognize odors

States that things taste funny or different

Changes in appetite

Be attentive to the risk of not smelling fire or spoiled food

Use of spices and condiments may facilitate appetite when authorized