Rough Draft Qualitative Research Critique and Ethical Considerations

Clostridium difficile infection

NRS – 433V

Introduction to Nursing Research

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Introduction

In an article dubbed “Clostridium difficile colitis: A clinical review,” Ong et al. (2017) present a qualitative study on Clostridium difficile infection (CDI) in which they discuss the epidemiology, diagnosis, clinical presentation, medical management, and surgical treatment. The authors review quite a number of literature papers, and they conclude that CDI is a leading cause of most healthcare-related diarrhoea. Further, they establish that it leads to increased mortality and morbidity in patients undergoing surgeries. According to the article, Clostridium difficile infection is "an etiology of diarrhoea from antibiotic use," and it has, over the years, increased in terms of severity and frequency. Also, the disease has increasingly shown resistance to the treatments currently available.

Background of study

The idea for the study came about due to the increasing concerns of CDIs. Specifically, there has been a general increase in the number of cases of the disease. The article observes that "in recent years, clostridium difficile infections (CDI) have shown marked increases in frequency, severity, and resistance to standard treatment." The frequency increased from 4.5 cases for every 1,000 clinical discharges to 8.2 (almost doubling) between 2001 and 2010. The mortality stands at 7%, and in one of the papers reviewed revealing close to half a million cases and 29,300 deaths in the U.S. between this period.

The statistics are obviously worrying particularly given the nature of infections. Thus, understanding the underlying root causes of this sudden upsurge is urgent. There is a need to understand the clinical factors that lead to increased infections. Additionally, it is necessary to understand the infection in terms of the clinical signs, symptoms, and diagnosis so that it is easy to identify potential victims for isolation and early treatment.

The significance of the study is based on the fact that CDI is a leading cause of diarrhoea related to healthcare, and which in turn increases the mortality and morbidity of patients undergoing surgical treatments. This, of course, has a huge impact on society. Other than simply increasing the medical cost and suffering in patients, it also reduces the chances of survival and recovery for surgical patients. Additionally, there has been an increase in failure to treatment. Resistance to standard treatment is yet another problem. These two taken together increase healthcare challenges in terms of the cost and personnel.

The purpose of the study is not explicitly stated. However, from the information provided and the conclusions, it can be inferred that the purpose was to increase the knowledge of CDI in terms of the medical management, epidemiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis, and surgical treatment. The research questions, also not stated, would be inferred as follows:

1. What are the clinical presentations of CDI?
2. What are the best treatment and management practices of CDI?
3. What are the diagnostic features of CDI?

In this instance, the research objectives would both relate to the problem of the study. Specifically, the research questions would serve as the basis for the research. For example, findings on the clinical presentation would relate with the purpose of understanding the clinical signs that are used to either decide for or against CDI during diagnosis.

Method of study

The study was based on the synthesis and analysis of papers in the literature. There could have been better methods to conduct the study but given the fact that a substantial amount of information already existed, there was no point in actually carrying out the primary study. That notwithstanding, the method was adequate in terms of addressing the research problem. The authors did not identify any specific point of view from which the study was conducted. However, based on the significant of the study, a quick guess can be made that the study was based on a social perspective. This is because the conclusions tie up the findings of the result to "clinical and economical challenges in the healthcare setting." Furthermore, the authors refer to the mortality and morbidity aspects of the infection, and these two are purely social concerns.

The article utilizes journal papers as the basis of information. Every often, the authors borrow from leading studies as related to the research topic as well as other healthcare areas that are of importance to the current study. While the majority of the sources used are journal articles, there are a few instances in which medical reports and statistics by a respected organization like the World Health Organization are used. The currency of sources varies greatly. There are sources from as early as the 1970s as well as others more recent like 2016. The authors do not critic these articles. Instead, they use them to build their own case. They also compare them to show a trend or to simply reinforce an idea. Nonetheless, the literature review is adequate enough to answer the research questions.

Results of the study and implications to nursing

The frequency of CDI more than doubled between 2001 and 2010. The mortality rate also increased, and currently stands at over 7%. CDI diagnosis is based on the presence of diarrhoea of at least 3 stools in a period of 24 hours, the presence of *C. difficile* toxin in the stool, and r radiographic proof of ileus. Clinical signs include self-limited diarrhoea, fever, abnormal WBC count, tachycardia, and abdominal pain. Medical treatment includes discontinuation of the causative antibiotic, avoidance of antiperistalsis agents, and resuscitation. Surgical treatment includes abdominal colectomy.

This information is very useful to nursing. Among many reasons, it adds to the knowledge base of nurses thereby making them better equipped to handle the infections. Additionally, the epidemiology calls for nurses’ attention. It is high time that nurses begin considering CDI a serious problem which manifests mostly in clinical settings and thereby put mechanisms in place to control it.

Ethical consideration

There were no ethical considerations for the study. The study did not include human subjects, and there was no provision for seeking of approval from relevant bodies.

Conclusion

Clostridium difficile infection is increasing in terms of frequency, mortality, and resistance to standard treatment. However, enough information is available pertaining to epidemiology, diagnosis, clinical presentation, medical management, and surgical treatment. This should serve as the starting point for nurse practitioners so that they can come up with better ways of managing this disease.

Reference

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