

H1N1 Nursing Proposal

Courtney Wiener

Kent State University

The news of H1N1 virus outbreak spread all over the country last year, and many people were worried about how they could prevent from getting the virus, or ways to treat the virus in case they were infected, to prevent any fatalities. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “about 130 million Americans - almost half the entire U.S. population - have been estimated to have either been infected with H1N1 or been vaccinated” (ANA, H1N1 Prevention, 2010). The best way to prevent yourself from getting the influenza virus is to get vaccinated each year. Although today, the craze about the H1N1 flu has slowed down, “According to the final FluView for the 2009-2010 influenza season (May 16–22, 2010), flu activity in the United States declined again from the previous week and is about the same as what is normally seen during the summer in the United States. Only a small number of influenza viruses are being reported, most of which are 2009 H1N1” (CDC, Flu view, 2010). This could have something to do with the vaccines that are readily available and with the decrease in the amount of people being exposed to the disease. Even though the flu activity has decreased, the current results also show that H1N1 has not diminished completely. The American Nurses Association (ANA) says “H1N1 is a novel strain of influenza. That means no one has immunity to it; everyone is susceptible. It is very infectious – it spreads easily,” so nurses still need to protect and help educate the community about this virus.

One population that needs the most protection from this virus is infants and toddlers in childcare facilities. The CDC says that young children and young adults have the highest rates of infection and hospitalization from H1N1 influenza. When the flu hits the hardest during the winter, children normally have to stay inside where they are enclosed in a classroom for long hours throughout the day, so if one child is exposed to the virus, it is very easy for them to pass it on. Young children like to put toys in their mouths and then pass it on to their friends, only for

their friend to do the same and pass it on back. With this constantly occurring it is difficult to keep toys and the daycare center germ free. Young children often don't remember things like washing their hands after going to the bathroom; nor do they always cough or sneeze into their elbow. Sometimes children will cough into their hands, causing the spread of germs if they touch something else with the same hand, and not go wash their hands or forget to cover their mouth at all. A good way to help protect the children, teachers, and parents is to tell the parents that the CDC recommends flu vaccines for all children ages six months to nineteen years old (CDC, H1N1 Flu, 2010). Parents can become very concerned about their child contracting H1N1, and often causes them to seek information through the media or internet, which could cause even more panic if the information is false or misleading. Using telenursing and telehealth, it is our duty as nurses to be competent in the information and public health data that is released by CDC and use this knowledge to help others read through the scary sounding words and statistics (ANA, What Nurses Can do About H1N1, 2010).

References

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