Having a CMD is Associated With Improved Nursing Home Quality of Care

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A recent article in the Journal found that the presence of a certified medical director (CMD) in a nursing home is an independent predictor of higher quality.¹ The American Medical Directors Association (AMDA) CMD program started in 1991 and has certified more than 2500 medical directors. Approximately 42% of medical directors have a CMD.² A large study such as this one showing that a medical director with a CMD can be associated with a 15% better quality than nursing homes without certified medical directors is certainly a gratifying finding. This certainly strongly suggests that nursing home medical directors should obtain a CMD.

The obtaining of a CMD signified enthusiasm on behalf of the medical director for obtaining an excellent education in both clinical and administrative issues. Most CMDs also attend the AMDA yearly meeting fairly regularly and many are involved in the local AMDA chapters. In addition, the AMDA members all receive the Journal and “Caring for the Ages.” All of this guarantees a high level of continuing education.

Thus, for example, the excellent quality of the annual meetings and the meeting updates in the Journal guarantee that AMDA members are at the cutting edge of long-term care.³⁻⁷ Use of the AMDA quality indicator for urinary incontinence has been shown to lead to process improvement in nursing homes.⁵ Both the meeting and the Journal provide multiple approaches to quality improvement in long-term care—a key issue for improving quality.⁶⁻¹⁸ AMDA also plays a major role in educating future medical directors through their Futures program.¹⁹,²⁰

Rowland et al⁵ discussed in detail some of the possible confounders in their study. One is whether or not persons who are certified as geriatricians would perform as well. Approximately 23% of medical directors are geriatricians;² however, many geriatricians are also CMD certified. The role of active ongoing AMDA membership as a confounder cannot be teased out.

Overall, this study¹ has shown that motivated AMDA members with a CMD can improve care in nursing homes. It’s time for us all to celebrate the difference that AMDA is making.

REFERENCES