

National Patient Safety Goals

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Fall-related injuries in Healthcare Facilities

Joint Commission organization is an accredited organization that focuses on healthcare professionals with the view of highlighting adverse events, serious conditions causes and the associated risk factors, management as well as preventive measures. One such event as highlighted in one of the brochures is fall-related injuries in health care facilities, causes/risk factors and interventions towards minimizing such falls. For a long time, we have experienced instances where people have sustained serious injuries as a result of falls. It could happen to the sick as well as physically fit people, young and old, strong and frail, and may also include health care providers.

It falls resulting into injuries may not only occur in the hospital set up but also in home-based care as well as facilities charged with the mandate of long time care of patients with chronic diseases. In the hospital set-up this falls could be due to drugs administered, diagnostic techniques, surgical interventions or medical conditions that often leave patients sick and frail. In otherwise normal persons this falls could be due to failure to adhere to safety precautions at their places of work or changes in the physiological functioning of our bodies like orthostatic and positional hypotension. The implications of these falls to patients and those who are not sick like staffs are far reaching. To patients injuries may complicate their current medical conditions resulting in unnecessary medical costs and prolonged hospital stay, falls depending on the parts of the bodies involved or heights can lead to long time complications like immobility, loss of some body parts or even death. But measures can be put in place to prevent or minimize these falls and also to ensure that those who suffer complications as a result of this complication in the hospital setup.

Among the measure is the need to communicate clearly to patients, staff and non-staff the causes, as well as the need to minimize falls in the hospital set up this, can be arrived at by incorporating communication on falls to be one of the management approach as patients are receiving care in the hospital set up.

Another preventive measure is to come up with a team charged with the responsibility of coming up with proper ways of minimizing falls. Members of this team should bring on board both staff and non-staff members and its membership reconstituted from time to time to ensure that it is upheld and sustained.

Tools should be put in place that will be used to assess risk factors associated with falls and come up with the care that is patient-centered based on the identified gaps. Interventions have to be put in place and follow-ups designed to ensure that the interventions put in place work towards minimizing the risks of falls. The brochure on falls, risk factors highlighted as well as the implantations proposed could reduce the number of falls and the complications arising from such falls.

Critique

The brochure is a milestone towards reducing the number of falls experience in healthcare facilities as it lays down in a systematic way a plan of action geared towards the issue. All the same the brochure does not take cognizance of the fact that our health care facilities face some challenges among them understaffing and also financial constraints. For this to be more effective therefore there may be a need to come up alternative measures to be put in place without necessarily attracting additional costs for example involvement of relatives and

caretakers in the whole process for this is not just important for sustainability but it is also cost effective.

I found this topic interesting because the increasing number of patients in our health facilities with injuries resulting from falls is wanting and it is something that is preventable, if prevented this will help to save on the cost of treatment and also to help reduce the time spent by patient in the hospital set-up.

The information in the brochure is very useful and beneficial, and if incorporated in patient management it will help in reducing deaths and complications resulting from falls as well as reducing the cost of care in health care facilities. The information is clear, and it has been presented in a way that it is broken down into sections for easier and better understanding of the content and the facts being communicated. The literature available for the topic was limited, but the available material was detailed enough to provide the require information and fill in the missing links as far knowledge on the topic is concerned.

This article does not only apply to patients in healthcare set up but can also be used by staff members in the hospital to minimize injury at their places of work. However, the aged and those who are weakened by medical conditions, surgery, and treatment may find the information in this brochure more helpful in minimizing injuries arising from falls. This information will go a long way in improving patient's safety if the causes and risk factors are minimized and the preventive measures implemented. For sustainability, a follow-up needs to be done so as to assess its effectiveness and make adjustments and improvements based on recommendations by those benefiting from the information.

In conclusion, injuries from falls are very common, and it may be difficult to eliminate these injuries completely but measures like those proposed in the brochure can go a long way in reducing these injuries. These injuries are not specific to a given age group or confined to specific conditions of the patient but everyone is at risk of developing injuries related to falls, and we all, therefore, have a collective responsibility in ensuring we remain safe even as we ensure that everyone around us is safe.

The major causes of injuries in the healthcare set-up can be attributed to diagnostic procedures, treatment modes, intervention procedures like surgery and medical conditions some of which may be chronic. All these combined puts a patient at a greater risk of developing injuries from falls due to altered physiological processes.

Such patients need to embrace information on safety and adhere to the laid down strategies that ensure every single one of them remains safe. They also need to take responsibility as members of the safety teams that are put in place to ensure safety. There is a need to be actively involved in developing and implementing the various safety tools at the same time providing feedback that can be used as a basis for improvement.