

Abstract

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Patient falls and falls with injury remain a leading safety event in hospitals leading to poor safety, quality, and financial outcomes. Falls contribute to high rates of morbidity and mortality, create financial burden, and place organizations at risk due to regulatory guidelines. Effective prevention programs must target the risk factors, identify level of risk, and implement mitigation strategies. Implementation of a successful prevention program includes improvement in knowledge, motivation, and education of both staff and patients. This pre-post-test quality improvement project was implemented over a twelve-week period and sought to pilot an evidence-based fall prevention curriculum within a group of Neurosciences nurses. The primary aims included increased knowledge and competency in fall prevention and risk mitigation. Nurses were recruited as self-identified Fall Prevention Leaders and participated in an educational intervention that targeted the three critical steps in fall prevention: risk assessment, identification of risk level, and implementation of mitigation strategies. Knowledge was measured using a pre-posttest knowledge in falls prevention and risk mitigation. Competency was measured in the participant's ability to complete the risk assessment tool correctly and to identify falls hazards in a room simulation. Knowledge scores were analyzed using a Wilcoxon Signed Rank test and did not show a significant difference in the pre-post summary scores. Subjects did report an increase in feeling "very confident" in falls prevention post intervention (pre-intervention 50% vs. post-intervention 100%). Falls prevention applies to nursing across all units and nurses play a critical role in promoting patient safety, minimizing medical errors, and are paramount in reducing harm. Falls prevention starts with the basics: risk assessment, identifying risk level, and implementing strategies to mitigate falls. These steps are critical and should be incorporated in fall prevention

programs. Further studies are needed to address the effectiveness of falls prevention knowledge and the impact on quality, safety, and financial outcomes.