August 2007

2006: A Safe Year for Falls at John Dempsey Hospital!

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/pcare_articles

Recommended Citation

"2006: A Safe Year for Falls at John Dempsey Hospital" (2007). Articles - Patient Care. 17.
http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/pcare_articles/17
2006: A Safe Year for Falls at John Dempsey Hospital!

Our Goal: To Prevent Harm
The most important goal for the Collaborative Center for Clinical Care Improvement (C4I) Patient Falls Group is to prevent any serious injury should a fall occur. While our goal is also to reduce the number of patient falls, it is especially important to prevent any serious harm to the patient. During calendar year 2006 (January-December), we accomplished our most important goal - there were no serious injuries related to any patient falls that occurred in the hospital during the past twelve months.

The “Secrets” of Our Success
There are a number of improvements in our clinical practice that have helped us reach this critical goal for patient safety:

1. Patients are being assessed on a regular, scheduled basis for their risk to fall, using the “Fall Risk Identification Tool” (see next page).
2. Interventions are put in place to decrease a patient’s risk to fall, and decrease the risk of serious injury should a fall occur:
   - Hospital beds that lower to just 16 inches above the floor
   - Night lights on the hospital beds to help with safer movement after dark
   - Protective pads for patients to wear to cushion patient movement
   - Communication among care providers for a patient’s risk to fall:
     - Yellow bracelets worn by the patient,
     - Yellow buttons placed near the patient’s bed, so all care providers can be aware of monitoring the patient for safety.

Thank you to all the staff in our hospital for your attention to this important part of patient care. Congratulations to us all for meeting this goal!

The Delirium Protocol
In addition to the interventions described above, a new plan of care is being piloted on Medicine 4 and Psychiatry-Medicine 3. This plan of care is to treat patients who have Delirium. Delirium causes patients to be confused, to have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, and to have difficulty being aware of their surroundings. Delirium can also increase a patient’s risk to fall.

The plan of care for Delirium provides assessment of how a patient is thinking and responding to his/her surroundings. If the patient is delirious and confused, a number of interventions are implemented. These interventions can clear the patient’s symptoms of delirium, and can then also decrease the risk to fall.

We will keep you updated on how this new plan of care is helping our patients.

“During calendar year 2006 (January through December), we accomplished our most important goal - there were no serious injuries related to any patient falls that occurred in the hospital during the past twelve months.”

- The C4I Patient Falls Group

“C4I” is dedicated to making John Dempsey Hospital the safest hospital in Connecticut. We’d like your feedback and comments! Call us at Ext. 7650 or e-mail us at C4I@uchc.edu. Patient Safety Alerts can be e-mailed to: PSA@uchc.edu

James O. Menzoian, MD and Rhea Sanford, RN, PhD, CS—Co-Directors
Kevin Larsen, QA Specialist—Susan Garthwait, Executive Assistant

C4I—Visit us on the Web: http://patientsafety.uchc.edu
Patient Falls Quiz

1. An important goal for John Dempsey Hospital is to prevent any serious patient injury should a patient fall occur. **True or False?**

2. During calendar year 2006, there were no serious patient injuries at John Dempsey Hospital that were related to patient falls. **True or False?**

3. Delirium is a condition that causes patients to feel confused, to have difficulty being aware of their surroundings, and increase their risk to fall. **True or False?**

4. John Dempsey Hospital has implemented a plan of care for patients with Delirium as a pilot on Medicine 4 and Psychiatry-Medicine 3. This plan of care can treat the delirium and help patients to again think clearly and move safely. **True or False?**

The answer to all of the questions above is: "True."