
“Fall Free Days”...An Innovative Fall Prevention
Initiative: The Team STEPPS™ Approach

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“Fall Free Days” ... An Innovative Fall Prevention Initiative: The Team STEPPS™ Approach

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Purpose:

- **Falls** are the **most frequent adverse event** reported in hospitals.
 - Of those who fall, **25%** suffer injuries which increase **morbidity, mortality and cost**.
 - **Falls...**are an important “**Nursing Sensitive Indicator**” of the **quality** of patient care.
 - **Innovative, evidence-based** nursing practices are needed to prevent patient falls.
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Significance:

- Research has identified positive relationships between certain “best practices” (EBP) and prevention of patient falls.
 - **Examples:**
 1. Team STEPPS™ (“situational awareness”).
 2. Proactive, hourly bedside rounding.
- Nevertheless, little is known about how best to **motivate** staff to use EBP patient safety practices.
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Strategy and Implementation:

- The **fall rate index** (2.75) was consistently below the NDNQI benchmark of 3.74.
- Nevertheless, a “shared mental model” was needed to **change existing culture** and further improve outcomes.

Team STEPPS™, a patient safety program, was the strategy employed to improve communication and teamwork in order to help achieve high quality patient outcomes, such as: preventing falls.

Strategy and Implementation:

- In 2008, the new Nurse Manager of a Medical/ Surgical Unit became interested in using the concept of public reporting of quality data as an innovative strategy to create a “shared mental model” (Team STEPPS™) .
 - EBP fall prevention best practices were “**hard-wired**” into day-to-day practice.
 - The number of “Fall Free Days” was posted at the nursing station.
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Evaluation:

- Since initiating the “Fall Free Days” initiative, with Team STEPPS™ and EBP nursing practices, **patient falls have decreased over 20% and fall-related injuries are minimal.**
 - Every clinical unit now posts the number of “Fall Free Days” as an integral part of fall prevention “best practice”.
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Implications for Practice:

- **Public reporting of quality data** can be successfully utilized as a **continuous learning opportunity** in the hospital setting.
 - Posting of unit-specific “Fall Free Days” serves as a **catalyst**, which **motivates** staff to improve communication and teamwork; and use evidence-based fall prevention practices, in order to safeguard patients.
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