Sustaining Low NDNQI Falls Rates in an Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit Using Innovative Falls Prevention Interventions

**PURPOSE:**
Implement strategies to decrease total falls and injury falls rates on the inpatient rehabilitation unit.

**RESULTS:**
Measurement: NDNQI fall data
- Total falls on the unit have remained below the NDNQI national mean for 7 of the last 8 quarters.
- Injury falls have remained below the national mean for all 8 quarters.

**METHODS:**
- Every patient is placed on falls prevention protocol.
- Patients are not allowed out of bed without shoes.
- Staff implemented use of the Egress test, an assessment of patient stability and readiness to ambulate.
  - The assessment is done on admission and on every shift.
  - The Egress test involves three steps:
    1. Sit to stand.
    2. Stationary marching.
    3. Stepping forward and backward.
  - Because patients in rehabilitation unit settings tire easily, the test is individualized for patients.

**HISTORY:**
- Falls are the fifth leading cause of death in elderly patients and contribute to 40% of nursing home admissions.
- Falls outcomes include poorer quality of life, extended hospital lengths of stay, and increased resource utilization.
- Patient falls incur $20 billion in direct health care costs annually.
- Patients on an inpatient rehabilitation unit are at high risk for falls due to their primary diagnoses and co-morbidities.

**EGRESS TEST**
1. Three repetitions: sit to stand.
   - First attempt patient should lift buttocks off of bed or chair 2 to 3 inches and then return to sitting. (Determines ability to bear weight)
   - On second and third attempt, patient should stand upright and then return to sitting. (Determines ability to bear weight)
   - **Note:** Partial or full upright standing reflects ability to bear weight.
2. Three steps stationary marching.
   - **Note:** Determines ability of each extremity to bear weight.
3. Each leg one step forward and backward; weight bearing leg stationary.
   - **Note:** Determines forward and backward weight shifting.

**IMPLICATIONS:**
- A telemetry unit in the hospital is piloting use of shoes during ambulation of their stroke patients.
- Nursing leaders in other inpatient units in the hospital are considering adoption of the Egress test for specific patient populations.
- A team of nurses and leaders are revising job responsibilities for sitters.
- Documentation of the Egress test may be added to the electronic medical record.