



'HOPPING' TOWARDS FALLS PREVENTION!

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BACKGROUND

Falls prevention in our hospitals is vital when considering that many falls are predictable. In addition, the engagement of staff and patients/Carers is essential in this process.

As part of our annual April Falls Month (AFM) competition, one hospital in Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) developed a novel approach to raising awareness.

DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

In 2017, Manly Hospital, South Wing 4, an adult Surgical /Orthopaedic ward, facilitated a creative tactic in their ward to promote falls prevention for inpatients that involved designing a series of 'Rabbit' posters.

The aim of the posters was to provide a visual prompt to patients, Carers and staff to raise awareness of falls prevention behaviours in the ward, as well as to provide advice on the management of falls should they occur.

A key element in the poster series was the use of humour, which has been acknowledged as an appropriate technique when highlighting interventions that are generally regarded as private and/or potentially embarrassing such as requesting toilet assistance. The purpose was to encourage patients to ask for help when the risk of a fall was present.

The eye-catching posters were displayed in targeted locations around the ward, including patient rooms, amenities, and public waiting areas. As a talking point, they did raise awareness of fall prevention initiatives for patients and staff.

DISTRIBUTION

Initially these were used on one ward. However, following exposure with the AFM competition across NSLHD, it was determined that the other five NSLHD hospitals would also like these posters, and they were printed and disseminated. Paediatric wards in particular liked them even though they were designed with adults in mind.

Eighteen months later, these posters have been used extensively in NSLHD wards, staff areas, outpatient and community health settings. Additional posters have also been developed to target ongoing staff education such as AFM 2018. The Rabbit symbol has now become synonymous with falls prevention in NSLHD.

CONCLUSION

Raising staff, patient and Carer awareness of falls prevention is important and these posters have been shown to be successful as an inclusive local health district activity.

THE FUTURE

The posters have a universal appeal, and more importantly, are appropriate for most hospital or clinical settings.

In addition, requests have been received to use the posters in other areas of New South Wales (NSW) and even in other countries e.g. the USA.

As such, the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) has adopted the posters and have been included with other falls prevention resources on offer from the service. This means that other health services across the state can access the posters for local use. The CEC will also manage requests from other states of Australia and other countries.

CEC Rabbit Falls Prevention Posters available at:
www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/patient-safety-programs/adult-patient-safety/falls-prevention/falls-prevention-in-hospitals/posters



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