

Paper Session D5: Promoting Patient Safety

Quality and Safety in the Fall Aftermath: Findings of Elderly Head Injured Fallers in Long-term Care and Health Policy Implications

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Purpose: To determine the frequency, treatment intervention(s) and deposition of elderly residents with head injury post-fall.

Theoretical Framework: Michell's Quality Health Outcomes Model

Methods: A three-year, prospective, quasi-experimental study with pretest/posttest design was instituted in long-term care. The primary sample were elderly residents who fell during the intervention year. Nursing staff used a 30-item validated post-fall assessment tool for 1 year. Using SPSS 7.0 and Poisson Regression we found 77 fallers, mean age 89.3 to have experienced a total of 207 falls and 79 physical injuries; 30 had head injury (14.4%); 9 went to the hospital (4.3), and 6 died within 1 week of their head injury. Over 2/3 of the fallers with head injury had cranial hematoma's (66.6%;n=20). Two had scalp lacerations (6.6%; n=2). Over 90% of the sample did not receive neurological or vital signs, diagnostic or laboratory studies post fall. One resident's experience is described using the data collected from the post-fall tool to add transparency to the quantitative data and to shed light and open discussion for health policy implications related to improving the competency of nursing staff and ultimately the care older adults receive in NH settings.