Improving Fall Risk Assessment of Cardiac Rehabilitation Patients

Penn Medicine Chester County Hospital

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Problem Statement

Lack of an objective process for identifying participants at risk for falls impacted staffing patterns, operation and team satisfaction which may increase the risk to patient safety.

Purpose:

• To identify an objective method for evaluating participants at risk of falling that would utilize a valid clinical instrument to enhance our practice of safe, high quality, patient care.

• Educate the staff on the use of the chosen method
Significance

- Falls are a leading cause for disability and death

- After a thorough review of the literature, no studies were found on fall prevention in a cardiac rehabilitation setting

- The TGUG test is the instrument used for inpatient evaluation of fall risk at our hospital

- Since closer supervision of such participants can determine safe staffing levels, the group decided to research methods used to identify risk for falling in other patient care settings.
Design

- The Timed Get-up-and-go Test (TGUG) and The Fall Risk Assessment Screen were made a required part of the intake assessment.

- The Cardiac Rehabilitation population consists of participants aged 18 years and older, who meet admission criteria for Phase II Cardiac Rehabilitation.

- Additional elements of the screening program include identification of recent falls; current medications; and evaluation of current psychological and cognitive status.

- Based on the overall evaluation and the objective data from the newly added screening tools, participants are rated as low, medium or high risk for falls.
Conclusions

- After implementation of the new process, the staff was able to add an objective evaluation to aid in the identification of a participant’s fall risk.

- Those at high risk for falling would be assigned one-to-one supervision.

- Re-evaluation of fall risk can be performed as needed during the prescribed CR program and upon completion.
Lessons Learned/Next Steps/Recommendations

- The TGUG and The Fall Risk Assessment Screen are a valuable addition to the evaluation of Cardiac Rehabilitation patients to identify risk for falls

- Next Steps
  - Make the fall risk assessment an outcome measure
  - Additional education for the staff in documentation of progress in the ITP
  - Develop a peer review process

- Recommendations
  - All cardiac rehabilitation programs should consider adding an objective method for the evaluation of fall risk
  - Determine if the methods used at Penn Medicine Chester County are applicable in settings with other cardiac rehabilitation populations
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