



KEY POINT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the outlined initiative was to determine the effectiveness of Safe Patient Handling (SPH) program implementation in a pediatric nursing unit. Goals of the project were to increase nursing care staff perception of workplace safety, increase job satisfaction, and decrease musculoskeletal injuries and associated costs.

On SHiPs and Safety: A Journey of Safe Patient Handling in Pediatrics

Huffman, G. M., Crumrine, J., Thompson, B., Mobley, B., Roth, K. and Roberts, C. 2014 | *Journal of Pediatric Nursing Volume 29, Issue 6, Pages 641-650*

Key Concepts/Context

Nursing personnel have repeatedly been ranked among professionals that are most frequently impacted by musculoskeletal injuries. While research in this area has traditionally focused on injuries that occur with adult patients, the growing epidemic of obesity in children makes this a relevant topic to pediatric nurses as well.

Methods

Surveys were used before and one year after implementation of the SPH program. The tools used were the “patient handling opinion” survey and the “patient handling risk assessment.” Additional information was gathered from occupational health department annual reports of injuries and direct costs of injuries. Stakeholders were involved in selecting lift equipment and an algorithm was created to assist staff regarding when and what type of lift equipment to use. Equipment was made available to specified units only after staff had been properly oriented. A multidisciplinary team gave input into making the equipment not only usable to the care providers, but took special care to ensure that patients and families were oriented to the new equipment and procedures.

Findings

One year post-implementation of the SPH program there was an increase in nursing care staff perception of workplace safety and decreases noted in both musculoskeletal injury occurrence and associated costs. In the seven years prior to SPH program implementation, the nursing unit averaged 3.5 injuries per year. This number decreased to 1.5 injuries per year after implementation. There was no significant change in job satisfaction.



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Design Implications

While musculoskeletal injuries have traditionally been associated with care providers who are in the adult setting, pediatric healthcare providers can also benefit from SPH programs. Design professionals can work with these care professionals to make spaces where it is easy to store, access, and use equipment that may often be bulky or cumbersome. Furthermore, the multidisciplinary approach demonstrated in this project was important to the success of the initiative in the pediatric environment.

Limitations

In order to preserve anonymity of participants, surveys administered prior to program implementation were not matched with those administered after program implementation. This was further complicated in that there was significant (40%) turnover rate due to organizational circumstances, so staff surveyed after implementation may not have been on the unit at the outset of the project.