



**Service Priorities and Programmes**  
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**Identifying prevalence, reasons and gaps of diaper usage in an acute hospital**

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**Introduction**

Diaper is widely used for patients ranging from infants to adults in hospitals worldwide. Use of diapers in the elderly is very common. Some patients with medical issues need to use diapers but some who do not have those problems are still given a diaper to prevent falls and because of incontinence. Health care providers may have a misconception of convenience of care in using diapers for these reasons.

**Objectives**

This study aimed to identify the prevalence of diaper usage in selected wards and the reason of using diaper. The secondary aim was to suggest strategies/ways to avoid unnecessary use of diaper.

**Methodology**

This is a prevalence survey study from 24 wards covering the Department of Medicine & Geriatrics, Orthopaedics and Surgery between 19 and 26 October 2016 in an acute hospital, United Christian Hospital, Hong Kong. Data were collected by NSD nurses and evidence-based practice ambassadors who were given training. Data were sourced from, but not limited to, Patient Assessment Form (PAF), Intake and Output record, Nursing Care Plan, interviewing patients/relative, nursing and nursing supporting staff.

**Result**

The overall prevalence rate of the diaper usage during admission was 37.9%, of which 42.3% was in the Department of Medicine & Geriatrics (M&G), 31.8% was in the Department of Surgery (SUR) and 32.2% was in the Department of Orthopaedics & Traumatology (O&T). A total of 46.8% of patients who had not used diapers before were given diapers after admission.

Of the 62 patients who were given a diaper during admission in SUR, 26 patients accounting for 41.9% had not used one before admission. Of 48 patients who were given a diaper during admission in O&T, 27 patients accounting for 56.3% had not used one before admission.

The top four reasons of diaper usage in all departments were faecal/urinary incontinence, poor patient condition, confusion and poor mobilization which

accounted for 38, 15, 10 and 8%, respectively. A total of 53 patients of those who had not used diapers before admission but were given diapers to wear, reported reasons as having poor mobilization and lower limb weakness. A clinical guideline on proper use of diaper that identified some gaps of the prevailing practice and possible solutions was suggested to improve clinical practice.