



Service Priorities and Programmes
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An Evolution of Safety Vest to Enhance Patients' Safety

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Introduction

Safety vest is used for a number of different purposes in health care setting. Although physical restraint is not recommended, under some circumstances, safety vests serve as an important protection to patient from fall. However, fall incidents even using of safety vest are not uncommon in hospital. Our project aims at enhancing patient safety by modification of the existing safety vest design.

Objectives

To review the design of safety vest to (1) Reduce the risk of fall and other generic incident; (2) Improve patient comfort; & (3) Facilitate easy handling

Methodology

With collaboration between Administrative Service Division and Nursing Service Division, the defects of the existing safety vest design are identified and some modifications are initiated as the following: 1. The inner belt design with adjustable buttons provides the best fit size to patients' different body build preventing patients from escaping through the loose fitting design and the large armholes. 2. The jetted mouth and loop fastening design instead of a knotting at patients' back ensures patients comfort especially when resting in bed. 3. More buttons are relocated to reinforce the highly stressed area while fewer buttons to the less stressed areas. Two buttons can be reduced as compared with the old design. 4. The length of strap is extended to fit for various beds and kept knot out of patient's reach. 5. The original 6 layers Poly-cotton fabrics are reduced to 4 layers. It is rather soft and easy to dry economically. 6. Color binding with clear size label is for good size identification.

Result

A trial test consisting of two phases was conducted in April and October 2012 respectively. Total 8 wards including Surgery, Medicine, Psychiatry, Orthopedics and Traumatology Department of PYNEH participated to test its effectiveness. The result of this pilot scheme shows that fall incidents related to safety vest dropped dramatically from 7 fall incidents as recorded in 2010 but no case in 2011 after applied the new safety vest. The feedback from frontline staff is positive and welcome. Besides, this design is awarded with gold prize in HKEC Bright Suggestion Scheme.

This new safety vest is beyond doubt an innovative design which can effectively reduce the risk of fall and other generic incident and at the same time enhancing patient comfort. It can also facilitate effective use of safety vest and improve laundry efficiency.