



Service Priorities and Programmes
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The use of protective hand gloves and other physical restraints among nursing home residents in Hong Kong

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Introduction

One of the quality indicators in nursing homes is the proper use of physical restraints. Improper use can be harmful and results in immobility, incontinence and pressure ulcers.

Objectives

Our objectives are: (1) to reveal the prevalence of the use of protective hand gloves and other physical restraints in nursing homes in Hong Kong; (2) to investigate the characteristics of residents on protective hand gloves (gloved residents); and (3) to assess the reasons and the complications.

Methodology

A survey using standardized questionnaires was conducted in nursing homes in New Territories West Cluster to investigate objectives (1) and (2) in May 2013. A clinical audit was also performed in one of the nursing homes by trained occupational therapists to assess objective (3).

Result

In the survey, of the 7274 residents in 82 nursing homes, the overall rate of any type of physical restraints was 42.0% (n=3054) and the rate of gloved residents was 15.8% (n=1146). Gloved residents were more commonly associated with the use of nasogastric tubes (32.1% [n=368] vs. 4.1% [n=249], p<0.001) and urinary catheters (11.2% [n=128] vs. 3.4% [n=206], p<0.001), and the presence of pressure ulcers (17.0% [n=195] vs. 4.7% [n=288], p<0.001) when compared with non-gloved residents. Moreover, 99.2% (n=1137) gloved residents had urinary or fecal incontinence. In the clinical audit in a nursing home consisting of 107 residents, 34 residents (31.8%) were gloved, in whom 82.4% (n=28) had dementia. The most common reasons for wearing gloves were combined (26.4%, n=9) and preventing

body scratching (26.4%, n=9), followed by preventing dislodgement of nasogastric tubes or urinary catheters (23.5%, n=8) and preventing removal of napkin or clothing (23.5%, n=8). Among gloved, 23.5% (n=8) were found to put on gloves of improper size or material and 8.8% (n=3) gloves were in poor condition or hygiene. Conclusions: The use of physical restraints in nursing home residents remained high. We planned to organize a multi-component intervention program (including redesigned gloves, education talk, educational pamphlet, regular assessment and surveillance) to ensure proper use of gloves and other physical restraints and reduce their uses.