

THE BENEFITS OF HYBRID SUPPORT SURFACES IN NURSING HOMES IN STAFFORDSHIRE

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Background / Introduction

Staffordshire has 101 nursing homes and there have been an increasing number of safeguarding referrals relating to pressure ulcers. From these equipment has been identified as a major issue. Following a case that went to coroners court and under Regulation 29 related to prevention of future deaths¹ a multi-agency review of care was called for.

Methods

Mattresses were audited, previous practices reviewed and the knowledge of staff reviewed.

Results

72 mattresses were audited and found to be in very poor condition (see figure 1), foam was stained with urine and in one case the inside of the mattress cover was smeared with faeces. One home had fifteen different types of mattress in use with no coordination of use or updating of staff. Pumps from one company were being used to operate mattresses from a differing company, overall staff knowledge of the correct use of equipment was very poor. Ongoing support was provided for the homes, a CQUIN target was given to work against. The multiple mattresses were replaced with one powered hybrid mattress².



Figure 1: The inside of a typical mattress

The change in mattress provision made a significant impact on care delivery and confidence of staff who felt they had greater autonomy to prescribe the alternating version of the mattress at the moment it was deemed necessary – rather than waiting for authorization. Staff are fully engaged with the new processes and beginning to identify further trends and themes needing to be addressed. Patients are reporting increased comfort on the hybrid when compared to the alternating systems previously used.

This is Mr D

The condition shown is Neurofibromatosis type – extensive cutaneous neurofibromas. This is a rare case, and very challenging regarding care provision.

Key issues

- How to make him comfortable.
- To enable him to keep autonomy.



Mr D had previously been sleeping on a variety of support surfaces including an alternating mattress (APAM), despite this his skin had broken down. In addition he found the APAM very uncomfortable and had great difficulty sleeping. Mr D agreed to try the hybrid mattress, he reported that his comfort was greatly improved and he was now sleeping. Within a short time the damage to his skin resolved. He also used a cushion when sitting out.

Conclusion

The use of hybrid mattresses has improved the care delivered in the care homes, staff have greater confidence and feel enabled to step up patient care without delay.

The benefits for patients have been great with improvements in both skin condition and sleep.

Reference:

- Chief Coroner (2013) Guidance Number 5a: Reports to prevent future deaths. Available from <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications/guidance-no-5a-reports-to-prevent-future-deaths/> [Accessed 17th January 2016]
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