Preventing Falls in the Oncology Patient

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Introduction

Oncology patients have higher fall rates and injuries than patients without cancer\(^1,3,4,9\). Due to the high prevalence of cancer care in the hospital setting, all nurses need to be aware of oncology-specific risk factors for falls.

PICO Question

Population: Adult oncology patients
Intervention: Falls prevention
Comparison: Risk factors and interventions to reduce falls
Outcome: Decrease falls in adult oncology patients
Question: What are risk factors and interventions to prevent falls in the oncology population?

Methods

A literature search was conducted at Penn State Hershey George T. Harrell Sciences Library using CINAHL, EbscoHost, and PubMed databases.

Keywords: falls prevention, oncology patients, falls program, cancer and falls

Inclusion Criteria: Articles within 10 years, inpatient hospitals, adult oncology patients

Fall Scales

- Hendrich II Fall Risk Model\(^5\)
- Cleveland Clinic–Capone Albert (CC-CA) Fall Risk Score\(^3\)
- Morse Fall Scale Assessment\(^2\)
- Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center Falls Risk Assessment\(^7\)

Recommendations

- Re-educate staff on fall risk factors\(^1,6,8\)
- Assist patient with toileting as needed\(^8\)
- Assess symptoms such as pain or nausea\(^8\)
- Reminder to call for help\(^4\)
- Medication review\(^2,6\)
- Hourly rounding\(^2,4,8\)
- Availability of bedside commode\(^4\)
- Observe gait and measures of strength\(^10\)
- More research needs to be conducted\(^1,3,9,10\)

Oncology-Specific Risk Factors

- Anemia/Blood product use\(^1,3,4\)
- Pain level\(^3\)
- Cancer diagnosis/Presence of metastasis\(^1,3,9\)
- Medications\(^1,3\)
- Chemotherapy/Biotherapy\(^1,10\)
- Peripheral neuropathy\(^1,5,8,10\)
- Radiation\(^1\)
- Functional status\(^1,4\)

PSCI Programs

July 2012: “Within Arms Reach”
PSCI implemented protocol which requires nursing staff to stay with patients while toileting who are on falls precaution.

November 2012: PSCI implemented protocol which requires all patients on falls precaution to have a bed alarm in place or a personal alarm on when out of bed.

Fall Scales