Introduction of Care Dependency Scale: A Pressure Ulcer Risk Assessment Tool in a Long Term Facility

Nkeiruka Archinihu, DNP, RN

Structured Abstract

Local Problem
Pressure ulcers have been a challenge to both the patients and the health-care team. The incidence of skin breakdown in healthcare facilities especially among the elderly is very high and could lead to more debilitating health problems. Preventing or at least reducing the incidence of pressure ulcers is an important goal for the health-care team. This could be achieved through the use of risk assessment tools in reducing the incidence of pressure ulcers. The nurse plays a pivotal role to help prevent or at least reduce the incidence of pressure ulcers using the appropriate assessment tools. The project elaborates on the problem of pressure ulcer incidence among the elderly as it exists in this author’s practice environment. This 96-bed long-term care facility has a normal occupancy of 84-90 residents. At the time of this review, there are 84 residents in the facility and four pressure ulcer cases; this reflects 4.76% of the population. Initial admission assessment with the appropriate risk assessment tools is very important in nursing practice and will help in determining the plan of care for the patient. Nationally, the National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (NPUAP) reported that pressure ulcers increase hospital costs significantly with an estimated cost in the United States to approach $11 billion (USD) annually, with a cost of between $500.00 (USD) and $70,000 (USD) per individual pressure ulcer.

Project Purpose
In this project, the proposed intervention is to educate nurses on the use of the care dependency scale as risk assessment tool using the Virginia Henderson Need theory as a framework.

Methodology
The training sessions were done on a one on one basis due to time and schedule conflicts. This created an opportunity to interact with each one and assess their knowledge. Fourteen staff members; registered nurses (RNs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), and Certified Nurse’s Assistants (CNAs) were randomly selected from the three different shifts and were given the pre-test questionnaires (3 RNs, 6 LPNs, and 5 CNAs). Ten out of the fourteen were available for the training and post-test (2 RNs, 4 LPNs, and 4 CNAs) this is 71.4% of the sampled population. The researcher evaluated the effectiveness of teaching the nurses by using a pre and post-test to identify what they know prior and after the training.

Results
After the training, 20% of the nurses upgraded their level of knowledge regarding pressure ulcer assessment, prevention, and reduction from beginner level to competence level, 50% indicated from proficient to competence, and 10% from novice
to expert. Seventy percent of the sampled and trained population indicated that prefer to use the care dependency scale to other tools. One hundred percent of the sample population agree or strongly agree a resident’s level of dependence for care affects the development of pressure ulcers and that nurses play a very important role in the reduction/prevention of pressure ulcer development in residents. One hundred percent agree or strongly agree their knowledge and use of risk assessment tools will reduce the development of pressure ulcers.

**Implications for Practice**
The CNAs are interested in knowing more about the care dependency scale because they are the ones who render more of the activities of daily living for the residents. The LPNs demonstrated some knowledge and admitted that a reliable tool will be beneficial both for the residents and the nurses while the RNs were more inclined to using the tool already in place mainly due to fear of change. Further training and awareness are needed to increase nursing staff knowledge at this facility to educate the nurses more on the need to effectively use the care dependency scale risk assessment tool to reduce the incidence of pressure ulcers.

*Keywords*: nurses’ role, pressure ulcer, skin integrity, assessment tools, risk assessment, care dependency scale, Virginia Henderson Need theory, and skin assessment.

Team Leader: Dr. Tonya Shanahan

Team Member: Dr. Gretchen McDaniel