

EARLY MOBILIZATION OF STROKE PATIENTS

Claudia Duran, BSN, RN, CMSRN;
Stanford Hospital and Clinics
cduranotero@stanfordmed.org

Purpose

New stroke patients are at risk for complications associated with prolonged bed rest. This project increased the number of adult stroke patients getting out of bed on an acute neurology unit via staff education and mobilization buddy system.

Background and Evidence Review

Hemiplegia and difficulty with mobility are common following a stroke. The literature states that decreased nurse awareness and education regarding the associated risks of patient immobilization results in higher risk of complications, such as pneumonia, deep vein thrombosis, pressure ulcers, and de-conditioning associated with bed rest. Very early ambulation is defined as out of bed within 24-48hrs of admission to the unit.

Methods

Neurology nurses and aides were surveyed to assess knowledge of lifting equipment and confidence assisting stroke patients out of bed. Then, these interventions were implemented with day shift staff: mobility assisting equipment training for patients requiring moderate to maximum assist levels; 'Mobilization Buddy System' for helping for nurses needing help to safely mobilize the patient; visual alerts posted in the unit encouraging mobilization; written communications to physicians and nurses explaining the project and benefits of early mobilization; and ambulation documentation reminders. The Unit Council was also enlisted to support the interventions.

Results

After 7 weeks, 27 day shift staff (93%) were trained in the program and 88% (n=58) of eligible acute stroke patients were out of bed within 48 hrs. The Buddy System was used by creating a triangle of 3 RNs. Nursing documentation of ambulation was found in only approximately a third of medical records.

Conclusion

The project demonstrated improvements in early mobilization of post stroke patients but needs to continue to gain compliance with documentation and spread to other shifts.

Selected References

- Ellery F (2008) Commentary of Smith, L., M. (2007) Early mobilization of acute stroke patients. *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 17, 1957-1958
- Smith L & Arias M (2007) Early mobilization of acute stroke patients. *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 16, 282-288
- Diserens K, Michael P, Bogousslavsky J, Early mobilization after a stroke: review of the literature. *Cerebrovasc Diseases*. 2006; 22:183-190

Key words: Early ambulation, Stroke, Mobility, nursing mobilization/stroke