PATS . . . A Positioning and Turning Study

Mary Gloeckner, RN, MS, CWON, APN, Ostomy/Wound Clinical Nurse Specialist
Mary Mclaughlin, BSN, RN, CWOCN, Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurse Specialist
Dorothy Hughes, ASN
Trinity Medical Center – Rock Island, IL

The Positioning and Turning Study (PATS) took place on a 33 bed oncology unit within a full service 514 bed acute care hospital. This particular unit had been struggling with an increase in the number of hospital acquired pressure ulcers. The wound care nurses’ were concerned that this could be related to inconsistency with the turning and repositioning of these high risk patients. Thus the PATS was designed and implemented.
The purpose of this study was to increase both nursing and patient satisfaction as well as compliance with turning and repositioning patients by utilizing a static air mattress overlay* for turning and a foam wedge for maintaining the desired position.

The method utilized for the PATS was as follows: All patients with a Braden score of 16 or less were placed on the PATS and turned every 2 hours utilizing the static air mattress overlay and positioned utilizing the foam wedge. A visual cue (simulated clock) was placed outside of each PATS patients’ room in an effort to increase awareness and compliance with the two hour turning schedule. The entire nursing staff on the unit was educated and inserviced on the purpose, method, interventions and data collection involved in the PATS. A PATS questionnaire, a Likert type scale, was given to all of the nursing staff prior to the implementation of the PATS and again at the conclusion of the PATS.

A log of the patients’ included in the study was maintained on the unit throughout the duration of the PATS. Thus yielding a reliable sample size. The conclusion and results of the study were based on the pre and post questionnaires completed by the nurses and nurses’ aides.

* WAFFLE® Mattress Overlay
Based on the data received from the pre- and post-questionnaires, the staff satisfaction on the available equipment for turning and repositioning patients climbed from 12% to 96% with the implementation of the PATS system. By using the wedge, 92% of the staff felt like their patients remained in the desired position. And with the complete PATS system (overlay and wedge together) the staff saw an improvement in their ability to turn and reposition patients every two hours. With PATS, the staff experienced less back pain and discomfort and worried less about the potential for self injury during patient turning and repositioning. Eighty-eight percent of the staff felt like the new system provided quicker and easier methods for turning and repositioning. And 56% thought their patients remained more comfortable during the turning and repositioning process. Finally, prior to the implementation of the PATS system, nearly half of the clinicians felt as though their patients were resistant to being turned and repositioned, while after PATS, only 8% still noticed any resistance.