Postural Hypotension – A Quality Improvement Project

Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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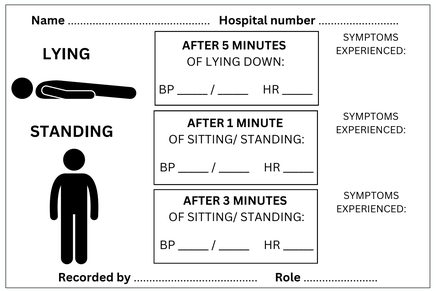
Background & Aims

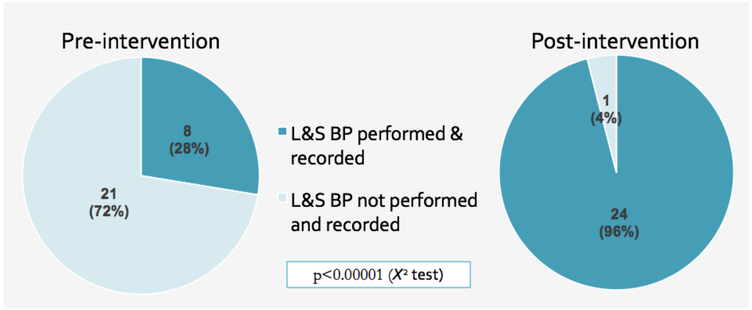
- Postural hypotension (PH) is an identifiable and potentially reversible cause of falls, affecting approximately 20% of older people living in the community and between 20 to 31% of older people living in long-term care facilities[1].
- The National Audit of Inpatient Falls[2] recommends lying and standing blood pressure (LSBP) measurements for patients aged over 65.
- Our project aims to develop a standardised approach to investigate and manage PH in the geriatrics department, starting with patients who have been admitted with a fall.

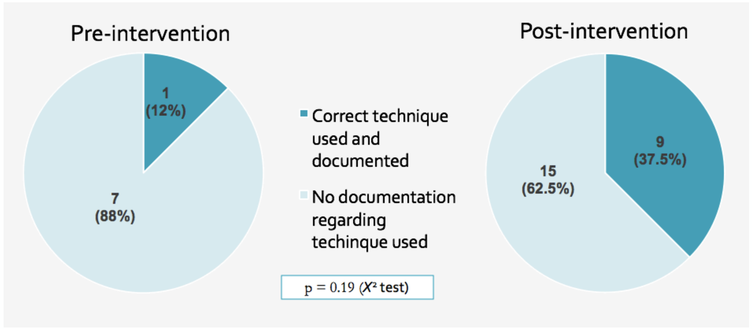
Methods

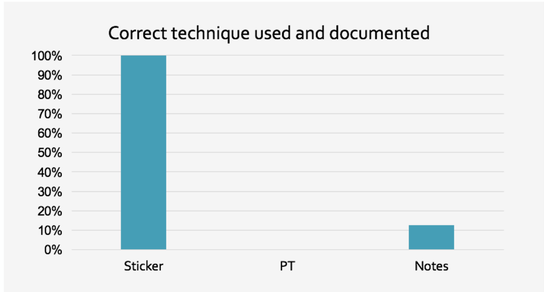
- We performed two cycles of retrospective data collection across three geriatric wards to assess whether patients admitted with a fall were investigated in accordance with the Royal College of Physicians' (RCP) recommendations[3].
- The following interventions were implemented between the cycles:
  - formal and informal teaching
  - RCP guidance attached to doctors' office noticeboards and BP monitoring devices
  - Sticker designed to ensure correct technique



Results







Summary of Results

- Percentage of patients with plan for L&S BP remained the same at 93%.
- 68% increase in lying and standing blood pressures performed post-interventions. 25.5% increase in correct technique used and documented post-interventions.
- Using the stickers ensured that correct technique was used and documented, compared to only 12.5% when documenting in notes and 0% when documenting on our electronic system, Patientrack.
- Post-interventions, only 37.5% of patients diagnosed with postural hypotension had lifestyle advice given and documented.

Conclusion & Recommendations

- Our results demonstrate that educational interventions and a standardised sticker to ensure clear documentation can significantly improve diagnosis of PH.
- The local Falls Prevention Team are keen to promote use of the stickers across the Trust and we have produced patient information leaflets to ensure all patients receive lifestyle advice.
- A further audit cycle will be performed in 4 weeks' time to re-evaluate investigation and management on PH in the geriatric department.

REFERENCES

[1] Bhanu, C. et al. (2022) 'Incidence of postural hypotension recorded in UK general practice: An electronic health records study', British Journal of General Practice, 73(726).
[2] Royal College of Physicians (2015). National Audit of Inpatient Falls [Internet]. Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership; 2015 p.1-60.
[3] Royal College of Physicians (2017). How to measure a lying and standing blood pressure (BP), Measurement of lying and standing blood pressure: A brief guide for clinical staff.