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### Safe patient handling: Implementing staff education to reduce exertion injuries

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**Statement of the Problem:** In 2016, Francis 2C, a general and plastic surgery in-patient unit, had an increased number of staff exertion injuries. After a review of injury incident reports, it can be concluded all exertion injuries in 2016 could have been prevented by utilizing available lift equipment. According to an ANA survey, "...almost 60% of nurses list disabling back injuries as one of the top three health safety issues" (Stenger, Montgomery, & Briesemeister, 2007). Utilization of lift equipment was found to decrease injury rates, but a change in nursing culture is also necessary to promote maximum safety (Zadvinskis & Salsbury, 2010). The purpose of this study was to determine if staff education (including leadership and culture education), as well as unit safety advocates, would decrease exertion injuries through increased safe patient handling equipment use.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** This quality improvement project was conducted by obtaining pre and post-survey data on staff knowledge and cultural perceptions of safe patient handling equipment. Safe patient handling education using ceiling lifts and slings was developed and presented to staff in four-hour sessions, during which staff had the opportunity to practice working with the sling and lift equipment. Staff committed to changing five behaviors in their daily practice to increase ceiling lift utilization and overall reduce exertion injuries.

**Findings:** To date, Francis 2C has seen an 80% decrease in exertion injuries since 2016. Post-implementation surveys have been sent out to staff and further results are expected in December 2017.

**Conclusion & Significance:** This project is ongoing with an expected completion date of February 2018. Conclusions and significance will then be determined.

**Recommendations:** Although this project is ongoing, it has been noted that staff education, buy-in, and culture change are integral factors to success in reducing exertion injuries, not just available safe patient handling equipment.

#### Biography

Brittney R. Dahlen is a staff registered nurse on a general surgery and plastic surgery in-patient nursing unit at Mayo Clinic Rochester. Brittney obtained a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from University of Minnesota in 2014. Brittney has worked at Mayo Clinic for over 3 years and has been very active in department and unit committees. She is involved with the NDNQI Pressure Injury and Restraint Survey, Skin Savers, Francis 2C Safety Committee Co-Chair, and Francis 2C Patient Experience Committee Co-Chair. Brittney holds a Certified Medical Surgical Registered Nursing and Bronze Quality Fellow specialty certifications. Brittney enjoys working with her nursing and multidisciplinary colleagues on quality improvement projects and is excited to pursue a Doctorate of Nursing Practice in Nursing Leadership.

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