Use of Wireless Technology to Prevent Patient Falls  
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**Problem:** Patient falls is the most common adverse event reported in acute care facilities. Of those who fall, 20-30% suffer injuries which significantly increase morbidity, mortality and healthcare costs.

**Evidence:** A wide range of evidence-based nursing practices are deployed to prevent patients from falling during hospitalization. These practices include the use of bed and chair alarms, and point-of-care rounding to proactively meet the needs of patients for toileting, ambulation/positioning, pain medication and other comfort measures.

**Strategy:** Despite the existence of evidence-based fall prevention activities in hospitals, quality management data continues to indicate an increasing trend in patient falls, especially bathroom-related patient falls. In 2010, at our hospital there were 147 patient falls and 22% (32) were bathroom-related.

**Practice Change:** In 2011, the Nurse Manager and staff of an Oncology Unit were early adopters of a new wireless communication technology system, called Vocera. Realizing the need to prevent bathroom-related patient falls, the staff use the wireless communication device to alert co-workers when they are staying with patients using the bathroom. Co-workers respect the importance of this "nursing best practice" and do not interrupt staff members engaged in this fall prevention activity.

**Evaluation:** As a result of using the wireless communication devise staff have improved their ability to work as a team. Consequently, patient falls and bathroom-related falls have been significantly decreased.

**Results:** In 2010, the Oncology Unit experience 12 patient falls (NDNQI Fall Index = 1.84) and in 2011 there were 8 patient falls (NDNQI Fall Index = 1.26). This is well below the national NDNQI Fall Index (3.5). Bathroom-related patient falls were decreased by 40% and the Oncology Unit had the lowest number of patient falls compared to all other clinical units in the hospital.

**Recommendations:** The use of wireless communication technology can be successful in improving the quality of patient care outcomes, specifically patient falls.

**Lessons Learned:** The use of modern technology to maximize the potential of clinical nursing practice (communication and teamwork among staff), and improve patient outcomes is an example of exemplary professional nursing practice.

**Bibliography:**