

Improving Accuracy of Patient Weights

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Improving Accuracy of Patient Weights

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Background

- Patient weights on the med/surg floors vary greatly from day to day due to inconsistencies in the process of obtaining the patients' weights.
- Lack of standardization with how staff performs daily weights and how they are documented.
- There is no policy/procedure in policy tech for obtaining patient weights.

PICO

Would standard work and a policy for obtaining patient weights decrease variations in patients' daily weights?

P-Patients who are ordered daily weights,
I-standard work flow for obtaining patient weights,
C-current practice,
O-decrease daily weight fluctuations.

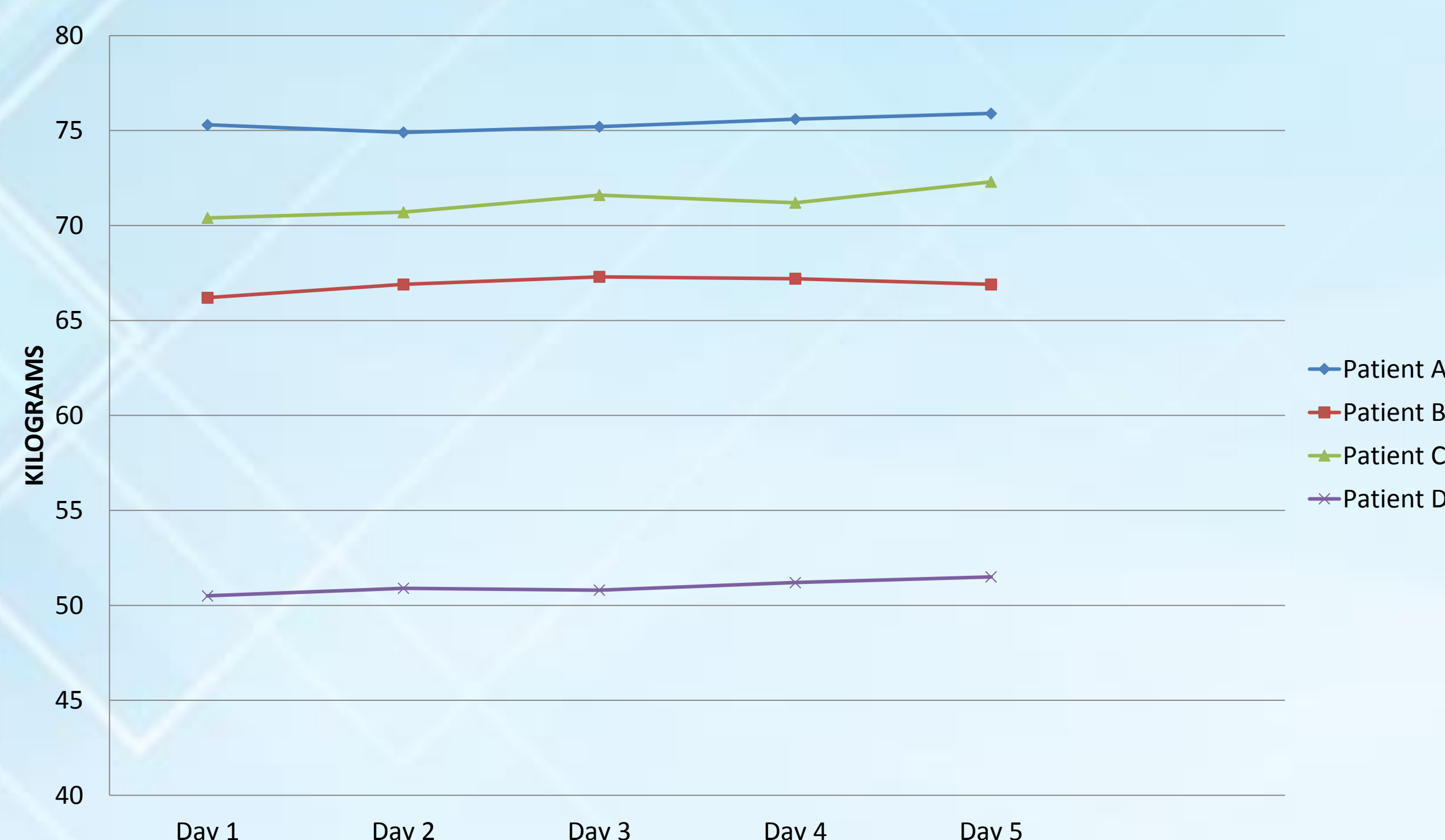
Evidence

- "Patient weight needs to be recorded and monitored during hospitalization for accurate drug dosing, assessment of response to therapy, and as an indicator of organ function." (Charani, 2015)
- "Inconsistencies in recording patient body weight, as well as using inaccurate or inappropriate weighing equipment, can have a negative impact on patient care, it can increase the risk of errors in diagnosis, interventions, treatment or medication dosage." (Evans, 2014)
- "Hospitals and patients would benefit from enhancing compliance with the systematic weighing of patients, staff training, and removing barriers to performing this task." (Lynga, 2012)
- "Patient weighing, can contribute to serious and life-threatening medication errors if a patient's weight is obtained, recorded, or communicated incorrectly." (Flenti, 2018)

Daily Weight Variations: No Standard



Daily Weight Variations: With Standard



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Methods

- Survey RNs and TPs on med/surg units on their current practice of obtaining and communicating daily weights.
- Supply the RNs and TPs with a checklist to verify what equipment was used and what the patient was wearing or had on the bed.
- Performed 8 chart audits (4 pre and 4 post) to assess if standard work was effective.
- Standard equipment using bed scale: 1 pillow, 1 fitted sheet, 1 dry flow pad, 1 flat sheet, gown, socks, SCD machine (if ordered).

Conclusion

- Evidence shows that implementing a standardized method of weight assessment would improve the accuracy of patients' weights.
- Development of a policy/procedure for obtaining patient weights would improve accuracy of patients' weights.
- Establishment of a routine way of charting daily weights and how they were obtained for charting in the electronic health would decrease fluctuations or variance in weight.

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