Falls in the Emergency Department (ADULT)

Katherine Andia BSN, RN  
*Lehigh Valley Health Network*

Emily Joyce  
*Lehigh Valley Health Network*

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**Published In/Presented At**
Andia, K., Joyce, E. (2014, June 5). *Falls in the Emergency Department (Adult)*. Poster presented at LVHN UHC/AACN Nurse Residency Program Graduation, Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, PA
FALLS IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Katherine Andia, BSN, RN
Emily Joyce, BSN, RN
The purpose of this study is to determine the reliability and validity of a fall risk assessment tool to be used in the emergency department as a predictor for falls in the emergency department outpatient population.
PICO QUESTION

In the adult ED population, would utilizing the Morse Fall Risk Scale, as opposed to the current outpatient fall risk assessment, lead to more individualized patient interventions?
FALL- RISK ASSESSMENT
per protocol

risk factors identified:
- severe pain
- postural hypotension
- nausea, dizziness, vertigo

pt meds
- age >65
- hx of: fall, fainting

impairment in: mobility, sensation
- sight, hearing, cognition

interventions initiated:
- stretcher
- wheelchair
- side rails up x1 x2
- bed low position
- brakes on
- visible from nurses’ station
- ID’d pt as ‘fall risk’ band
- chart
- room

at bedside: family, companion, sitter, staff
- child held by parent
- call light in reach of
- pt
- parent, family, companion

pt instructed:
- don’t get up without assistance
### Morse Fall Risk Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of Falls</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Diagnosis</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulatory Aid</td>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crutches/Cane/Walker</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None/Bed Rest/Wheel Chair/Nurse</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV/Heparin Lock</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gait/Transferring</td>
<td>Impaired</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normal/Bed Rest/Immobile</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Status</td>
<td>Forget Limitations</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oriented to Own Ability</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Morse Fall Score*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Risk</td>
<td>45 and higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Risk</td>
<td>24 – 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Risk</td>
<td>0 - 24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The Joint Commission (2012) mandates that patients be assessed for fall risk and reassessed periodically.” (Flarity, Pate, & Finch, 2013, p. 57)

“The Institute for Emergency Nursing Research validated the need for an evidence-based ED-specific fall risk assessment tool to assist nurses in customizing prevention interventions related to ED patient fall risk.” (Flarity, Pate, & Finch, 2013, p. 59)

“A]cute/critical care settings [suggest] that a large number of patients in this setting of care are at very high risk for anticipated physiological falls.” (Quigley, Palacios, & Spehar, 2006, p. 172)

“Risk profiling requires consistent application of a valid, reliable fall risk assessment tool that identifies patients at risk.” (Quigley, Palacios, & Spehar, 2006, p. 169)
“Authors of…meta-analysis [studies] on fall-risk screening concluded that the MFS [(Morse Fall Risk Scale)]…and nurses’ clinical judgment are comparable in accuracy.” (Wilder, Houser, Pitcher, & Qin, 2010, p. 486)

“The MFS…[has] been developed using rigorous research design…[and have been] prospectively validated in more than one setting.” (Kim, et al., 2007, p. 428)

“The training of the raters is considered essential if substantial differences in scoring across the raters in patient assessment are to be avoided.” (Chow, et al., 2006, p. 562).

The Morse Fall Risk Scale has been “tested clinically across different ranges of areas of specialty…and [has] demonstrated good clinical validity and reliability.” (Chow, et al., 2006, p. 557).
BARRIERS & STRATEGIES

- **Barrier:** Fast pace of the ED combined with nurse habit, workload and time constraints

- **Strategy to Overcome:** Ease of utilization of the tool within the computer system, generalized education, ease of identification of nursing fall interventions
Expected Outcomes

Improved patient interventions and guidelines for preventing patient falls in the ED.
PROJECT PLANS

▪ Morse Fall Risk category survey among seasoned nurses to determine tool validity

▪ Morse Fall Risk Scale utilization among a select group of nurses, followed by chart review and follow-up to determine tool validity, reliability and ease of use
“Each nurse [must become]…accountable for preventing falls.” (Alexander, Kinsley, & Waszinski, 2013, p. 350)

“Fall prevention is a 2-step process of risk assessment and application of individualized fall prevention interventions.” (Alexander, Kinsley, & Waszinski, 2013, p. 351)
Questions or Comments?
References


