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“Comparing Highest Level of Mobility (HLM) Scores Reported by Physical Therapists and Nurses at an Urban Medical Center in Louisiana”

Background: There are over 30 million people hospitalized in the United States yearly. Hospital stays can increase the risk of mobility loss or diminished function in patients. This can lead to reduced ambulation well after a patient’s hospital stay; therefore, it is very important to reduce this risk while patients are in the hospital. Johns Hopkins Hospital started the Activity and Mobility Promotion (AMP) program to help patients be active in the hospital and reduce the risk of patient function or mobility loss. Now, the AMP project is being used in many hospitals around the country to help reduce this risk. Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center is one of the hospitals in Louisiana that is researching AMP.

Methods: At Our Lady of the Lake, 4 wards were designated as AMP pilot units. These wards include the med 5, neuro, STU and 4MNT units. Data regarding patient activity was taken at random times by distinguished observers. Observers were from many different professions and included physical therapists, medical students, registered nurses, and research personnel. Observers would check on patients throughout the day and note their activity at that time. They would give patients a score between 1 and 8, 1 representing low patient mobility (lying in bed) and 8 representing high patient mobility (walking >250 feet). It is planned to implement the AMP project hospital-wide after sufficient data from these 4 pilot units is collected.

Results: Inter-personnel reliability for this project is very important. It is proposed that physical therapists report higher highest level of mobility (HLM) scores than RN’s. Physical therapists usually have designated times allotted for patient interaction where they can get the patient to increase their mobility. This time may not be allotted for RN’s. Additionally, physical therapists may have encouraged patients to be more active during their PT sessions.

Discussion/Conclusion: Preliminary data has shown the critical importance of AMP. It has allowed patients to increase their mobility in the hospital, which can result in shorter hospital stays. It is important that observers properly document HLM scores of patients. It is recommended that further research be done to observe the differences between PT’s and RN’s HLM scores. A potential solution could include the production of a systematic way to encourage patient movement in the hospitals that all hospital staff could use when interacting with patients.