‘Breaking Rituals’ of Ward Routine Change of Bed Linen

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Background/Aim

All the inpatient wards at Yishun Community Hospital have adopted the routine bed linen changing of three times a week done by most acute hospitals. However in Rehabilitation Care Wards, above 90% of the patients did not stay on their beds for long period during the day. The patients had their meals in the common dining area, received therapy at the ward gym and were actively engaged in volunteer activities. Above 70% of patients were diaper-free as they were able to ambulate to the toilet with staff assistance or use of walking aids. This project aims to study the routine bed changing process and to propose a change of routine practices suitable for community hospital setting.

Methodology

A team was formed to study the routine of bed-making process in a pilot rehabilitation care ward.

- Data on patient resting-time on bed were collected and analyzed. During the day as the patients were occupied with day activities, the total ‘time resting on bed’ was 2 to 3 hours. Hence, the team members proposed breaking the ritual of routine linen changing.

- Questionnaires survey were done for 24 patients and family members. This was to engage patients and caregivers on the change of routine ward practices.

- Time motion study was conducted to evaluate the process of linen changing. The nursing staff took 7 minutes for each bed linen change including siting the patient out of bed as indicated in Chart 1. A total of 2 hours for Bed Occupancy Rate (OR) above 70% (25 beds).

The team planned to break the ritual of bed linen changing from 3-times to 2-times a week.

Patients and family members were engaged in the bed linen change survey in the pilot rehabilitation ward. The results were shown in Diagram 1 and 2.

The team continued to evaluate patients and care giver feedback and in May 2017, implemented the bed linen changing to once weekly as indicated in Diagram 3. Above 70% BOR, the time-saved for nursing care staff was increased to 4 hours per week.

Cost-Saving: An estimated cost of $1820 was saved a year and total of $5760 when spread to three wards (refer to Diagram 4).

- Nursing Manpower-Saving: An estimated of manpower cost saving for 2x linen changing per month of 8 hours = $1,078 per month and $2,156 per year.

- Estimated Time-Saving per month

  - 1st phase: 13.3 hours
  - 2nd phase: 8 hours

- Estimated Laundry cost

  - 1st phase: $3,384.63
  - 2nd phase: $1,926.96

Sustainability & Follow-up

The team has reviewed the different patient’s profile to assess feasibility and has adopted once a week bed linen changing since May 2017 and had spread to all Rehabilitation wards in Yishun Community Hospital. Environment services manager will continue to track bed sheets laundry expenses monthly.

Conclusion

The team members were energized for given the opportunity to the review of this routine process. They were able to further review the frequency by getting references with other community hospitals practices before reducing to 1x bed linen change week. The team learnt the importance of engaging patient and family members to contribute to the change of ward routine processes.

Beds on contact precaution were excluded from this project. The nurses will continue to change the bed linen whenever it is soiled. There was no reported acquired skin infection. Infection control team will continue to monitor and report any acquired infections.

Management support in this project encouraged the ward team to start small initiatives. The team felt empowered to make changes and will continue to improve on their ward processes to simplify their work.

Results

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