

Abstract

Background :

Despite the common usage of physical restraint in psychiatric settings, its risk and adverse effect are not negligible. Alternative management strategies should be worked out in order to minimize its use. Factors associated with use of physical restraint should therefore be identified, so that preventive measures or alternatives can be formulated and implemented accordingly.

Objective :

To examine patient-related factors and staff-related factors associated with use of physical restraint.

Method :

Patient-related variables were extracted from inpatient clinical notes. Staff characteristics and attitude were explored by a self-administered questionnaires distributed to frontline nursing staff. Other staff-related variables such as staff ratio and ward occupancy were collected from hospital nursing department.

Result :

28.7% of the admitted patients experienced physical restraint. For patient-related factors, restrained patients are more likely to be younger, having a primary diagnosis of unspecified psychosis, having suicide attempts or violence prior to admission, or having a longer duration of hospitalization. For staff-related factors, experienced staff is more critical towards the use of physical restraint. They are less likely to use restraint too. Moreover, there is a significant difference in attitude between male and female staff, especially on their view on effectiveness of psychotropic medication. Overall, the negative consequences of physical restraint are under-recognized. Discrepancies between attitude and real practice are also observed.

Conclusion :

To reduce use of physical restraint, particular caution is necessary in managing patients with certain characteristics. Staff education in promoting recognition of negative effects of physical restraint has to be implemented.

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