

WHY PHYSIOTHERAPY IS BENEFICIAL AND IMPORTANT FOR INPATIENT ELDERLY CASELOAD.

- Physiotherapy for the elderly inpatients is established and utilised as it is shown to develop the MDT in successful orthogeriatric care.
- Physiotherapists are there to assess mobility problems or changes and the functional needs to identify rehabilitation and person-centred goals to restore their function whilst promoting health and preventing disability. This may be preventing deterioration or maintaining physical function.
- People with dementia and cognitive deficits are at an increased risk of delirium; this can come from pain, infection, nutrition, constipation, hydration (dehydration), medication or environment → *this affecting a patient's mood, ability to express their needs and mobility status*. This can affect length of stay in hospital and mortality. –
- Furthermore, patients with frailty and older patients with prolonged immobility (bedrest) are at an increased risk of sarcopenic muscle loss, reduced strength and power – these factors can have a knock-on effect of causing a reduced balance and increased risk of falls. Therefore, as physiotherapists the aim on these wards are to maintain a patient's baseline mobility, improve it if possible and ensure a safe discharge to prevent the resulting secondary complications. (14% of admissions for dementia patients surround falls).
- Physiotherapists can aim to reduce the burden on care givers by promoting and maintaining independence.

Considerations suggested in NICE Guidelines: (Multimorbidity 2016; Dementia 2018)

- Take into account of how the person's health conditions and treatments interact and may effect their ability and quality of life.
 - o For a physiotherapist on an elderly ward this may include a patient with a chronic disease such as PD which can alter mobility patterns such as shuffling and cause fatigue and reduced appetite consequently effect mobility potentials.
- Establish patient goals, values and priorities
 - o For a physiotherapist this involves establishing what is important to a patient, when patients are aware of deteriorating health this may involve activity management and symptoms management to ensure this. This can be used to develop SMART rehabilitation goals.

HOW THIS WILL INFLUENCE MY PRACTICE

- *Promote mobility and ensure patients are avoiding bed rest. With caseloads sometimes meaning not all patients can be seen on the ward ensuring that each patient has a safe t/f method to at least allow patients to sit out of bed daily and highlight this to the nurse.*
- *Ensure patients are included in developing their goals – whether this be to maintain their abilities or to develop their abilities → SMART GOALS and discuss this with the patient.*
- *Ensure patients are encouraged to be independent as possible.*
- *Aim to provide holistic treatment and consider their other needs and what effect this will have – use ideas of activity modification, pacing and positions of ease to do this.*

References:

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