



Australian Falls Prevention Project for Hospitals & Residential Aged Care Facilities

An Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care initiative
in association with Queensland Health

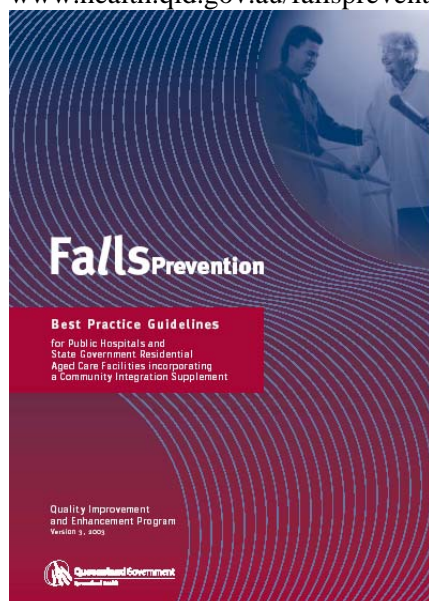
e-progress update 1: May 2004

This is the first of regular progress updates that will be released on a bimonthly basis

Background:

In February 2004, the Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Council) provided project funding to Queensland Health for 12 months to promote a nationally consistent approach to the reduction of harm from falls occurring in older people in hospitals and residential aged care facilities. As part of this process, the project will be producing national falls prevention best practice guidelines (informed by the latest literature, expert opinion and a consultation process that will be outlined in further detail later in this progress update). This project has resulted from recognition by the Council that falls and fall related injury is a problem in health care facilities due to the ageing population; incidence of falls and the impact of falls on individuals and healthcare facilities. This project will be the starting point for a longer term multi-strategic approach by the ACSQHC to advancing this priority area of work.

Queensland Health through its Quality Improvement and Enhancement Program developed Falls Prevention Best Practice Guidelines for Public Hospitals and State Government Residential Aged Care Facilities (these can be accessed at www.health.qld.gov.au/fallsprevention).



These were endorsed by the ACSQHC in 2002 and 6500 CDs were distributed nationally. Feedback received by the ACSQHC identified that they could add value to efforts to reduce falls by

undertaking a range of initiatives but highest rated was developing these guidelines into national best practice guidelines.

In addition to the production of national falls prevention best practice guidelines for hospitals and residential aged care facilities, Queensland Health is contracted to undertake the following:

- Develop support materials for the implementation of national guidelines
- Develop a plan for the national implementation of the guidelines
- Develop recommendations for the standardisation of processes for reporting and recording of falls related incidents in hospitals and residential aged care facilities
- Develop recommendations for a national accreditation standard for falls prevention activities

Project Team:

Ms Susan Brandis (Executive Officer of the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme) is managing this project, with the following team based at QEII Jubilee Hospital:

Mr Michael Bourke (Principal Project Officer – Contracts)

Mr Paul Vardon (Principal Project Officer – Communication and Coordination)

Ms Sonya Mizzi (Executive Coordinator)

The project team is being supported by a National Taskforce and Expert Panel which are both currently being established and will be meeting in the near future

Consultation

The project team are conscious that there is a great deal of falls prevention activity already occurring in Australian hospitals and residential aged care facilities, and sees the benefits and opportunities through sharing and learning.

It is recognised that it is of utmost importance that key stakeholders (including consumers, clinicians, health care facility managers, peak industry and health professional agencies etc) across Australia are involved in this project as everyone has a role to play in reducing harm from falls in hospitals and residential aged care facilities. Particular attention will be placed on considering the specific needs of

Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

The consultation phase of the project runs from May to July 2004 however findings and advice received after this period will be considered.

Contributions to the project are most welcome and the following range of methods is being used to include as many people as possible in the consultation process:

- Written submissions
- Online questionnaire
- State and Territory based workshops
- State and Territory based teleconferences
- Expert based workshops
- Key stakeholder and expert interviews
- Online question and answer service

For further information on how you can make a contribution please contact the project team or go to the project website.

Pilot consultation workshops

1. On 21.4.04 a half day pilot consultation workshop was conducted at the Queensland Health Scientific Services Building in Brisbane.

This was attended by 43 people including managerial and clinical staff from public and private hospitals and residential aged care facilities (from the wider Brisbane region including Toowoomba and the Gold Coast), as well as representatives from the Optometrists Association and Pharmacy Guild.

The workshop consisted of brief didactic presentations, guest speaker presentation by Dr Catherine Yelland, concurrent small group sessions and a large group interactive session.

2. On 23.4.04 a facility based pilot consultation workshop held at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital was conducted.

This was attended by 33 people including managerial and clinical staff from public and private hospitals and residential aged care facilities (from the wider Brisbane region including the Sunshine Coast), with 10 from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital from a range of areas/units.

The workshop consisted of brief didactic presentations and a large group interactive session

Evaluations from both pilot workshops identified that the share and learn sessions were highly regarded (and the guest speaker presentation in the first and longer pilot) and that both workshops would benefit from having their time extended.

A high standard and quality of responses were received by the project team in the consultation workshops that were useful in regards to identifying what is needed and what needs to be done to progress the priority of reducing harm from falls.

Pilot consultation teleconference

On 12 May 2004 a Queensland wide pilot consultation teleconference is planned in targeting health care facility staff in rural and remote areas. Registrations can be made by contacting the project team.

Did you know?

- New preliminary research indicates that elderly individuals who have infections maybe temporarily at a heightened risk of falls (Office of the Provincial Health Officer, Ministry of Health, British Columbia. (2004). *Prevention of Falls and Injuries Among the Elderly*).
- The early weeks after an elderly person is discharged from an acute hospital are a high-risk time for falls (Office of the Provincial Health Officer, Ministry of Health, British Columbia. (2004). *Prevention of Falls and Injuries Among the Elderly*).
- The impact of falling on the quality on people's lives should not be forgotten in the current focus on risk management (Gillespie, L. 2204. Editorial: Preventing falls in elderly people. *British Medical Journal*; 328:653-654 920 March)
- Over 60 Randomised controlled trials of interventions to prevent falling have now been published (Gillespie, L. 2204. Editorial: Preventing falls in elderly people. *British Medical Journal*; 328:653-654 920 March).

Conference opportunity: On 21-23 November this year, Australia's first inaugural Falls Prevention Conference is being held in Manly, NSW. Abstracts close 2 July 2004. For further information see www.powri.edu.au/AFP2004

Latest literature: Approximately each week 5-10 relevant falls prevention articles are published including the following in 2004:

- Cochrane reviews on falls, hip protectors, vitamin D and environmental modifications
- A Victorian study recently published in the *British Medical Journal* is the first randomised control study to produce significant results (30%) in falls rates in sub acute settings. (Haines, T; Bennell, K; Osborne, R & Hill, K. 2004. Effectiveness of targeted falls prevention programme in sub acute hospital setting: randomised control trial. *British Medical Journal* 2004;328:676 (20 March)

To find out more, to be involved or to let the project team know of what you are doing to reduce the harm from falls please contact:

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