

Physiotherapy impact on falls in Elderly Mental Health complex care units: A pilot project



Rebekah Ramsay, Specialist Physiotherapist; Carol Thomson and Elaine Grier, Physiotherapy Support Workers
Mental Health Physiotherapy, Ailsa Hospital

Introduction

- Risk of falling is exacerbated by mental health problems, such as dementia, depression, mania and anxiety. (Evans et al. 2001.)
 - Treatment of mental health conditions e.g. psychotropic medication and ECT also increase falls risk. (Modreker et al. 2009.)
 - "Evidence base for falls prevention for older people with mental health problems appears to be poorly developed and inconclusive, leaving practitioners struggling to prevent and manage falls in these populations." (Bunn et al. 2014)
- Multifactorial interventions which include exercise can be effective in older people with cognitive impairment and depression.**
(Burgon et al. 2019)

Aim

To identify the impact of regular physiotherapy input and reduce incidence of falls by 20% in Elderly Mental Health wards by March 2022

Objectives:

1. Contribution to the ongoing Falls Prevention Project in EMH wards.
2. Identification of EMH ward staff's perception of the physiotherapy role.
3. Introduction of a regular physiotherapy service in EMH wards.

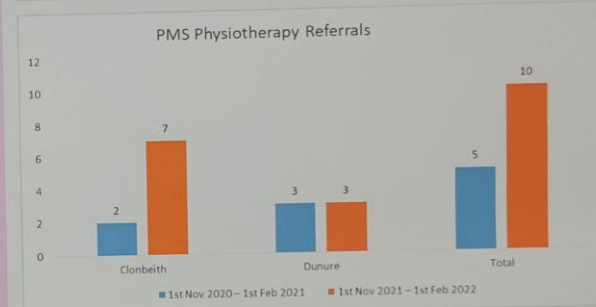
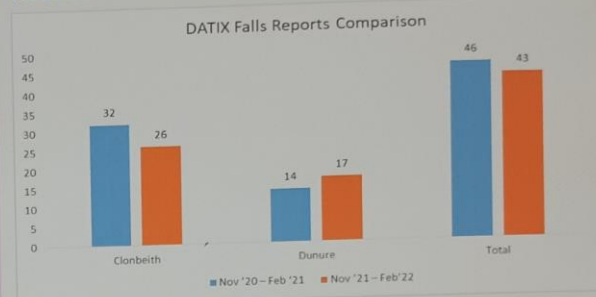
Methods



Data was collected between 1st November 2021 – 1st February 2022 and compared with the same three month period of the previous year (1st November 2020 – 1st February 2021).

Falls Reduction	Staff Perceptions	Physiotherapy Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tinetti Balance & Gait Assessments • DATIX Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Questionnaires • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral management (PMS) • Regular physiotherapy input

Results



	Clonbeith	Dunure
Completed Tinetti Ax	2	8
Physiotherapy Involvement	9	7
PMS Referrals	Increase	No change
Falls	20.6% reduction	19.3% increase

Staff Questionnaires

- Main barrier identified to encouraging patients to move more is **staffing levels** for both wards.
- Staff highlighted the importance of a **collaborative approach** between physiotherapy and ward staff in increasing patient movement.
- Staff recognised the value of physiotherapy for their patients however highlighted that they did not currently receive enough physiotherapy provision on their wards.

Discussion

- Increase in falls in Dunure - May be related to improved reporting of falls as a result of ongoing ward Falls Prevention Project.
- Increased falls for Dunure did not correlate with increase in physiotherapy referrals - Highlights the need for education on physiotherapy input for falls.
- Limited Tinetti assessments completed in Clonbeith however increased referral rates - Different strategies required to identify physiotherapy input for each ward.
- Increased referral rates in Clonbeith may reflect staff opinion that early falls intervention is important.

References

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- Burgon, C., Darby, J., Pollock, K., van der Wardt, V., Peach, T., Beck, L., Logan, P. and Harwood, R.H., 2019. Perspectives of healthcare professionals in England on falls interventions for people with dementia: a qualitative interview study. *BMJ open*, 9(2), p.e028702.

Future Work

- Complete baseline balance and mobility assessments for patients on admission
- Development of "I Can" activity boards
- Collaboration with ward staff for ward based activity groups
- Collaboration with current ward falls project to deliver staff training on enhancing mobility and reducing falls risk
- Development of flow chart for physiotherapy referral pathway and criteria

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Staff and patients in Clonbeith and Dunure wards