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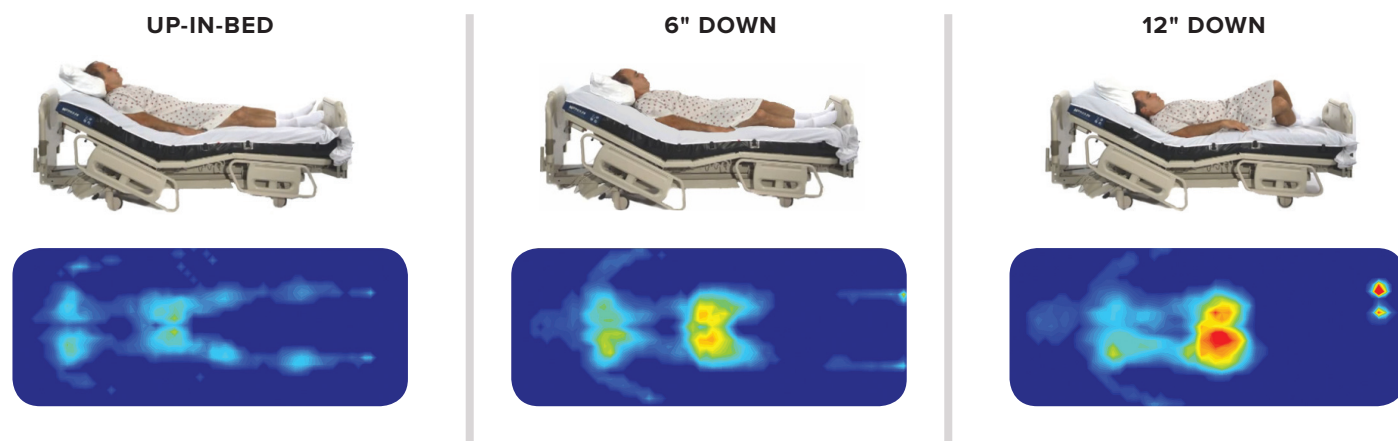
Asheville Specialty Hospital's Pressure Ulcer Initiative Utilizing the Hercules Patient Repositioner™

BACKGROUND

Asheville Specialty Hospital (ASH) cares for very high acuity patients whose lengths of stay often exceed 20 days. Patients at ASH are generally debilitated and are highly susceptible to the formation of decubitus pressure ulcers due to various medically complex conditions.

In February of 2014, ASH launched a clinical initiative to investigate the importance of maintaining the patient's proper position in a healthcare bed and the influence of this positioning on the prevalence of pressure ulcers. This initiative involved the utilization of a new innovative medical device called The Hercules Patient Repositioner™ (Hercules). The goal of this clinical initiative was to determine if repositioning a patient up in bed as often as possible reduces the incidences of pressure ulcers and/or prevents pressure ulcers from increasing in severity (stage).

When a patient is in a healthcare bed, the head of the bed (HOB) is often elevated to improve patient comfort. The HOB is also required to be raised to at least 30 degrees due to medical interventions such as feeding tubes and mechanical ventilation. As a result of the HOB being raised, gravity and patient movement cause the patient to migrate down in bed. As the patient migrates down, weight shifts onto their sacral area, buttocks and heels, thus increasing the potential for skin breakdown and pressure ulcer development. This phenomenon can be seen in the pressure mapping images below.



FINDINGS

In February 2014, we initiated a 90-day trial utilizing 2 Hercules systems with patients highly susceptible for the formation of pressure ulcers (Braden Scores equal to or less than 18). During the trial, patients were pro-actively managed up in bed; every time a caregiver walked into a patient's room, their position on the bed's surface was observed and if repositioning was required, Hercules was operated to reposition the patient. As a result, no patients on Hercules developed newly acquired skin breakdown or nosocomial pressure ulcers. Furthermore, patients that were admitted with pressure ulcers (stages 2-4) had no additional skin breakdown and did not experience an increase in the severity of their existing pressure ulcers.



FINDINGS CONTINUED

As a result of the success of the trial, ASH purchased 6 Hercules Patient Repositioners. The trial also established a new protocol that ASH uses for patient repositioning. Now, every time a caregiver passes by or enters a patient's room, the patient's location on the bed is observed. If they are not all the way up in bed, they are repositioned regardless of how far down they have migrated. Therefore, since we purchased Hercules and implemented our new protocols, we no longer allow our patients to migrate very far down in bed. We attribute these items to positive clinical outcome improvements.

In addition to the clinical benefits noted above, Hercules Patient Repositioners have established a new standard of care at ASH. Hercules has helped us enhance the patient experience, providing a comfortable and dignified repositioning method, as well as created a much safer work environment for our staff. We have also seen significant efficiency gains as only one caregiver is required to reposition a patient instead of the 2 to 4 required using traditional methods. A final benefit we have realized is a 70% reduction in our specialty bed rental expenditures as we have decreased our dependency on the rental of specialty surfaces.

“70% reduction in specialty bed rental expense since purchasing Hercules.”

BOB DESOTELLE, MHA | CEO | ASHEVILLE SPECIALTY HOSPITAL



Based on these favorable results, an additional 6 Hercules were purchased in 2014 and we plan to continue purchasing additional Hercules throughout 2015.

HOW THE HERCULES PATIENT REPOSITIONER WORKS

The Hercules Patient Repositioning System fits on a majority of hospital beds and is comprised of three components: a drive system, a sleep surface and a special sheet, which is twice the length of a standard flat sheet allowing 8 to 10 patient repositionings per use.

Hercules enables the bottom sheet to move like a conveyor allowing a single caregiver to reposition a patient up in bed to a comfortable and low pressure position in less than 10 seconds with the simple push of a button on the drive system. Additionally, since the patient moves with the sheet, friction that can cause shear and skin tears is virtually eliminated, providing an environment for enhanced clinical outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS & BENEFITS

The Hercules Patient Repositioner's ability to allow a single caregiver to instantly reposition a patient up in bed has significantly improved the clinical outcomes for our patients, as well as helped reduce our specialty bed rental costs by more than 70%. With Hercules, our patients experience a smooth and comfortable repositioning, which favorably impacts their dignity and reduces their feelings of helplessness. Thus, our patients have an overall improved and positive experience.

The Hercules Patient Repositioner has also positively affected the facilities' staff and administration. Our staff, from the CNA to Physical Therapy to the Nurse, all benefit from using Hercules since it eliminates the struggle of manually pulling patients up in bed, decreases the risk of staff injury and increases the efficiency associated with their workload. We believe the purchase of Hercules demonstrates to our staff that we are concerned about, and committed to, protecting their safety. Finally, we are also confident that Hercules will promote caregiver retention and increase compliance with patient repositioning protocols.



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