Preventing Crib Falls

Problem

Patients falls are a major problem in acute care hospitals. Patients fall during hospitalizations because of a number of reasons including weakness, the effects of medications, instability related to their illness, and slipping on the floor.

While falls occur far less frequently in pediatrics, the nurse must remember a number of important things to keep children safe during hospitalization. This includes the use of protective equipment and side rails.

Consequence

Falls can cause injury and should never occur to a patient during hospitalization.

Solution

Here are some suggested steps to take to address this problem.

- In pediatrics, the equipment used in caring for patients is different than those for adults; safety features must be known and consistently used.
- For younger infants, cribs are often used during hospitalization to provide a safe and comfortable environment for the child to sleep.
- The cribs are often significantly raised off the floor to make it easier for nurses, but this also increases the distance to the floor if the child should accidentally fall.
- Make sure you elevate the side rails on the crib when you are finished providing care at the bedside, or if you need to turn your back or look away from the child.
- Ensure that appropriately sized patients are placed in cribs.
- Older and larger children may be able to climb over the top of the side rails; in this case ensure the child is assessed or a canopy is placed over the top of the crib.
- Using the safety features is essential for the safety of hospitalized children.
References

Avoiding Common Nursing Errors, Lisa Marcucci, MD, Editor, Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2010.

Note: A narrated e-Learning module of this Nugget is available at LearningNurse.com.