Abstract

Lisa qualified as an Adult Registered Nurse in February 2011 from Queens University, Belfast. As a newly qualified staff nurse, Lisa worked in a Nursing Home before accepting a post as a Band 5 in the Regional Coronary Care Unit, at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast. Lisa has remained in CCU for the past 10 years where she developed her passion for cardiology. This has been reflected by the work and commitment shown by completing a number of specialist cardiology courses including a post graduate diploma in Cardiology. Lisa was successful in becoming the Ward Manager of Ward 5C, RVH in January 2021.

Micheál is a qualified band 5 staff nurse since 2020. He trained at the University of East Anglia, Norwich and moved home to Belfast to take a post on the inpatient cardiac ward at the Regional Heart Centre. As well as his undergraduate in Adult Nursing, Micheál is currently studying part-time to obtain an MSc in Acute and Critical Care. He has completed his first-year, undertaking modules in leadership, quantitative research and pharmacotherapeutics. He has also completed courses on ECG interpretation and is Advanced Life Support trained. Micheál’s passion for falls prevention and his desire to promote patient safety resulted in him being given the role of FallSafe Champion for the Ward 5C, RVH.

In July 2021 Ward 5C experienced a moderate fall incident which required a post fall review. The learning from this highlighted the need for the ward to adopt an MDT approach to falls prevention. The Ward Manger identified ‘Falls Prevention’ as the focus of the month in July 2021 and FallSafe training was provided by the FallSafe Coordinator which was supported by the cardiology Clinical Educator. At this time FallSafe Champions were identified, however, the focus on falls prevention QI work was interrupted due to staff redeployment and changes within the cardiology service. In March 2022 a major fall occurred on the ward and it was apparent trough increased datix trends that the ward was experiencing increased inpatient falls. From the post fall review completed, it again demonstrated the need for the ward to adopt an MDT approach to falls prevention. Trends identified caution with cardiac medication in relation to BP management, diuretics and heart rate limiting medications. This prompted Lisa and Micheál to explore the contributory factors to the falls occurring and what measures could be implemented to reduce the risk of it occurring again. The speciality of cardiology has a number of factors to be considered, regarding the patients risk of falling increasing on and throughout admission; medications, external attachments and specialist procedures. It also should be considered the suspected increased frailty of our patients due to Covid19.

In April 22, Micheál presented at the Cardiology Governance meeting highlighting the increase in falls and how essential it was to foster a multidisciplinary approach to falls prevention. From this, a Cardiology MDT falls group was formed. This has resulted in monthly falls meetings taking place within cardiology. The aim is to identify trends, share learning and ensure everybody has a role in falls prevention. There is also a large focus on education and prevention specifically with new members of staff. We strive to maintain a ‘no blame’ culture and utilise any incidents as learning opportunities. Visual aids have been developed and utilised in order to better highlight patients who may be at risk. We display a ‘Falls walking stick’ on our ward FallSafe Board. This is updated daily by the FallSafe Champion and provides staff, visitors and relatives with the status of falls within Ward 5C.

Despite being relatively new to the role of FallSafe Champions, we hope to reduce the number of inpatient falls on our ward. We are utilizing resources such as audits and falls assistive technology and low entry beds to help us reach this goal. We are in the process of piloting fall assistive technology, and this is already proving beneficial to our patients and staff. To date, we have experienced a significant reduction in the number of falls per month in Ward 5C. Ultimately, our goal would be to achieve one or more months without a fall occurring.