

Fall injuries and entrapment

The cost issue

Fall injuries are among the most serious problems in hospital care, and a vast majority of all falls that take place in hospitals occur around the bed. In the USA alone, somewhere between 700,000 to 1,000,000 people suffer from fall injuries each year while attending hospital care and observational studies show that 60–70% of all falls in hospital occur from the bed or bedside chair¹.

Many patients become restless during sleep due to medical conditions such as stroke, Parkinson's disease and certain mental conditions. These patients often become disoriented or confused while sleeping or upon waking. The injuries sustained from a serious fall have many repercussions, often long-term, on both the physical and psychological condition of the patient as well as on their ability to rehabilitate and fully recover.

The costs of fall related injuries are therefore substantial, both to the health care system and to society as a whole. These costs stem from direct sources such as surgical treatment and prolonged hospital stays, but there are numerous cost-effects to be added from indirect sources such as work-absence rates and losses of income from family members related to increased dependency on others during convalescence.

A fall in a hospital that results in serious injury is estimated to add at least \$13 000 to a patient's costs, just as a result of the increased length of stay and surgical costs. The average cost of a fall injury in the USA is \$19,440 USD if you include hospitals, nursing homes, emergency rooms and home healthcare².



Preventive cost in hospitals and health care also comes at a high rate from the extra staffing required for patient surveillance in order to monitor patients with fall risks. The injuries in themselves are cause for escalating costs as well, due to the patients' prolonged periods of treatment. There are more days spent in hospital care, longer periods of rehabilitation and a higher expense in surgical treatment.

For more on finding effective solutions to prevent fall injuries and entrapment in and around hospital or medical beds, please read our full series of articles on the subject.

1) Source: the medical journal of Australia / Oxford journals, 2) Source: learnnottofall.

This is the second article of a series of three related to entrapment and fall injuries produced by Human Care.