
Risks and Side Effects of Restraint Use

Psychological/Emotional Effects

- Feelings of humiliation, loss of dignity
- Diminished quality of life; increased stress, confusion, fear
- Depression, withdrawal, isolation, desolation; loss of hope and internal motivation
- Anger, frustration, demoralization
- Increased agitation, hostility, and aggression; learned dependence
- Diminished staff opinion of the resident

Physical Effects

- Pressure ulcers and skin irritation
- Bone loss from decreased weight-bearing activity
- Stiffness and muscle atrophy from lack of use
- Increased risk of respiratory infection
- Reduced functional capacity, decreased ambulation
- Increased risk of contractures
- Decreased mobility
- Deconditioning
- Physical discomfort, increased pain
- Serious injuries from falls
- Increased morbidity and mortality
- Increased risk of death from struggling to get free
- Increased stress on the heart
- Increased risk of death due to strangulation or asphyxiation
- Risk of burns if trying to burn the restraint off
- Risk of injury from restraint friction on the skin
- Nerve injuries
- Increased constipation, increased risk of fecal impaction
- Increased incontinence
- Increased risk of urinary tract infection due to urinary stasis
- Sleep disturbances
- Restricted circulation
- Decreased appetite

Benefits of Individualized Care and Freedom from Restraints

Psychological/Emotional Effects: Physical Effects:

- Increased self-esteem and dignity
 - Improved quality of life
 - Increased participation in decision-making
 - Less confusion, depression, and withdrawal
 - Decreased anger, agitation, hostility, and aggression
 - Increased opportunities for socialization
 - Increased hope and motivation for improvement
- Fewer pressure ulcers, skin irritation, and skin tears
 - Less bone loss and muscle atrophy
 - Decreased risk of respiratory and urinary infections
 - Improved functional capacity, decreased dependence
 - Less risk of death and serious injury from a fall
 - Fewer incontinence episodes, less cost of care
 - Less constipation, fewer impactions
 - Improvements in sleep and rest patterns
 - Improved circulation and appetite

Excerpted from “*Providing a Quality Life While Avoiding Restraint Usage*,”
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