

FALLS ARE EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

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INTRODUCTION

Falls among older adults in psychiatric inpatient wards are at least four times more common than in other acute hospital settings. Risk is heightened by acute changes in mental state, altered cognition, and medication side effects such as drowsiness, postural hypotension, continence changes, and extrapyramidal gait disturbances (Carpels et al., 2022).

At South Ward, an older adult psychiatric unit at Eastern Health, communication of consumer's falls risk and mobility needs are shared with the multidisciplinary team using paper-based and verbal handovers, mobility charts and notes.

However, it was hypothesized these methods may not adequately communicate to the broader South Ward team a consumer's mobility needs.

The 'Red Dot Project' was developed to support all ward staff in identifying consumers who require physical assistance to mobilise, making falls everyone's business.

METHODOLOGY



It was hypothesized that further methods were required to communicate if a consumer required physical assistance when mobilising on South Ward.

Pre-implementation: Surveys were provided to South Ward staff evaluating staff confidence (ranging from -5, least confident, to +5, most confident) in identifying if a consumer required assistance to mobilise.



Implementation: Red laminated dots were attached to gait aids of consumer's that required physical assistance to mobilise, in addition to previously utilised handover methods. Education was provided to staff via face-to-face methods and in e-mail format in regards to the project.

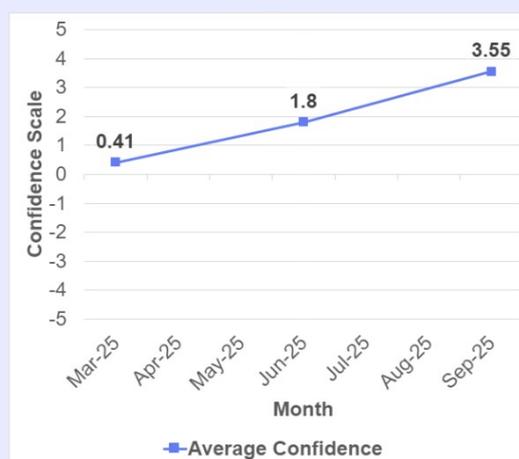
Evaluation: The project was evaluated at 3-month and 6-month post implementation using the previously mentioned confidence scale surveys.



RESULTS

Figure 1. highlights staff confidence levels in identifying if a consumer, not in their direct care, needs assistance to mobilise. Confidence levels increased from +0.41 in March 2025 (27 participants) to +1.8 in June 2025 (22 participants) to +3.55 (20 participants) in September 2025.

Figure 1. Average clinician confidence in identifying if a consumer requires assistance to mobilise



CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Adding laminated red dots to gait aids and providing education to MDT staff are feasible ways of improving confidence of staff in identifying consumers that require physical assistance on an older adult psychiatric unit.

Further directions include evaluating falls data and ensuring education sessions are sustained with staff turnover by embedding these within the processes on the ward.

REFERENCES

Carpels, A., de Smet, L., Desplenter, S., & de Hert, M. (2022). Falls Among Psychiatric Inpatients: A Systematic Review of Literature. *Alpha psychiatry*, 23(5), 217-222. <https://doi.org/10.5152/alphapsychiatry.2022.21735>