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# Respecting Our Elders: Say No to Restraints!

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# Respecting Our Elders: Say No to Restraints!

Charity G. Shenk, SN & Stephanie J. Williams, SN

## What We Learned

Research has shown that physical restraints have harmful effects both physically and psychologically when they are used on the older adult population. Nurses must lead the way to implement education programs for staff and advocate for patients to continue to decrease the use of restraints.

### Background

Despite evidence of adverse effects of restraint use and congressional action in the late 1980s giving older adults the right to be free of restraints in long-term care settings, the use of restraints continues.

### Purpose & Aims

- Examine the historical use of physical restraints
- Look at current research about the use of restraints
- Better understand the adverse physical and psychological effects of physical restraints in the older adult population
- Better understand how nursing can make a difference in continuing to decrease the use of physical restraints

### Methods

- Database search - CINAHL
- Research articles only
- Published 2008-2014
- Search terms – Physical restraints; older adults; long term care

### Results



- Four research studies were evaluated for this review.
- All four studies looked at health consequences related to the use of physical restraints in the older adult population.
- Two studies were longitudinal samplings of nursing home residents representing 12,820 and 254,519 residents respectively.
- One study was a community-based epidemiological survey representing 847 nursing home residents and 256 primary caregivers.
- The fourth study was a survey of 34 physiotherapists who evaluated injury potential of a variety of restraints.

### Conclusions

- Physical health consequences of restraint use
  - Increased incidence of pressure sores
  - Decreased ability to perform activities of daily living (ADLs)
  - Increased walking dependence
- Psychological health consequences of restraint use
  - Increased rates of depression
  - Increased rates of behavioral issues
  - Decline in cognitive status

### Next Steps

- Nurses must be involved in education and patient advocacy in decreasing the use of restraints in the older adult population
- By decreasing restraint use we will improve quality of life and lower the adverse complications associated with use of restraints in long-term care settings.

### Limitations

- There is very little recent research on restraint use.
- Most research on restraint use was sentinel research prior to the congressional action of the late 1980s.