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Physical Restraint Use within Maltese Long-Term Care Settings

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Background

The holistic study looked at the locally unexplored environment, providing a platform of knowledge base and information on physical restraint use.

The project secured relevant information focal to the older person residents, health care providers and policy makers within long-term care settings.

Method

A questionnaire, 'Physical Restraint Use' (PRU), employing mixed methodologies was developed, focusing on, (a) types of physical restraint devices used locally, (b) mode and extent of application, (c) older person characteristics that potentially push towards restraint use, (d) reactions to restraint use, (e) health care providers' perceptions to restraint use within the work context, environmental and safety concerns, (f) effects of restraint use affecting older persons' rights.

Health care providers, within long-term care settings in Malta (n=13), and hands-on with the older persons, participated. Questionnaires were distributed to 434 health care providers, 180 booklets returned within a 3-month time line, making for a 41.5% response rate.

Results

A high incidence of bed rails and harness use was registered, with participants acknowledging using 16 different types of devices. The total duration of restraints in excess of 2 hours by far exceeded durations less than 2 hours. Participants acknowledged the adverse reactions to the devices, reporting restlessness (87.9%), physical and cognitive consequences (66.7%), and apathy (30.3%).

Conclusion

The study zoomed on the sensitivity surrounding physical restraint use. It substantiated published data and offered novel contributions to the body of knowledge pertaining to the use of physical restraints.

For the intent of this conference, this presentation will focus only on restraint devices in use, duration of restraint use within a 24-hour period and older persons' reactions to the devices.

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