



# Initiative to Reduce Patient Handling Injuries During Lateral Transfer

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## BACKGROUND

- The high risk for work-related musculoskeletal injuries among nurses and is a well-known safety issue.
- The incidence rates for various types of healthcare workers range from 103.6-220.6 per 10,000 full-time healthcare worker.
- Data support that exertion, which is the force or effort required to lift, move, or handle patients, is a major contributing cause of work-related injury, with lateral transfers and patient repositioning in bed being the most frequent patient handling activities.
- Without the use of various types of safe patient handling equipment, the forces exerted regularly on healthcare workers' musculoskeletal system while manually moving and lifting often exceed a level that can be safely tolerated by the human body.
- The need for nurses and nursing assistants in all areas of the hospital to engage in patient handling activities repeatedly throughout the day puts them at high risk for injury.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of our project was to reduce patient handling injuries during lateral patient transfers.

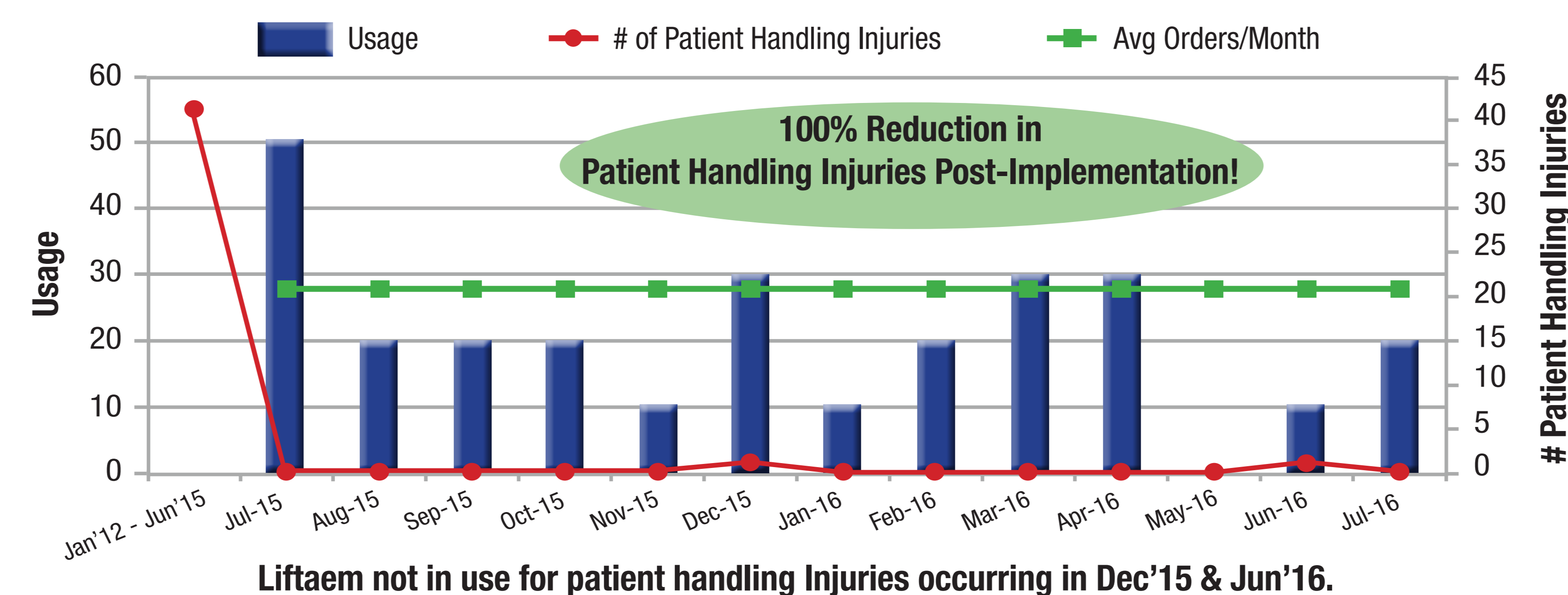
## METHODS

- Jan'12 -Jun'15 (42 months) our facility had 41 patient handling injuries associated with lateral patient transfers.
- The standard of care for lateral patient transfers was draw sheets.
- On July 1, 2015 we implemented a new protocol for lateral patient transfer in the Operating Room for all patients, Emergency Room for patients arriving by ambulance and/or immobile and for medical-surgical patients with mobility limitations.
- The new protocol required the use of a lateral transfer device instead of a drawsheet during lateral transfer.
- All staff were educated on the proper use of the device.

## RESULTS

- Our facility saw a 100% reduction in patient handling injuries related to lateral patient transfers in the first month of implementation which has continued to stay at zero injuries for 13 months post-implementation.
- Staff report that patient transfers are much easier when using the device.
- During the 13-month implementation period, the cost of purchasing the lateral transfer device was \$24,300, but our cost avoidance from injury reduction was \$292,500, providing an ROI of \$268,200.
- During this time there were two new patient handling injuries, both of which occurred when the lateral transfer device was not being used.

## CINICAL OUTCOME



## CONCLUSIONS

The use of a lateral transfer device instead of a drawsheet for the identified patient transfers has resulted in a significant reduction in our healthcare worker injuries and associated cost. We will continue to track patient handling injuries on a monthly basis to validate the ongoing success of our new protocol.

### References:

- 2014 Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Fragala, et al, (2016). Patient handling injuries: Risk factors and risk-reduction strategies. American Nurse Today. 11(5): 40-44.