

Post-Fall Clinical Assessment Case Study Development Guide

The purpose of this guide is to direct you through steps to develop case studies to be used for staff education regarding how to conduct a post-fall clinical assessment and apply your hospital's policies and procedures to a patient case. The use of cases from your own patient population should make this exercise more meaningful to your staff.

- 1) Collect information from the medical record of one or more recently hospitalized patients who experienced a fall resulting in injury. If using more than one case, select cases with a range of injury severity (e.g. skin tear vs. fracture) and/or varying circumstances (e.g. witnessed vs. unwitnessed; hit head vs. not). Suggested information to collect includes factors that may influence the degree of injury experienced by the patient(s) such as:
 - a. Patient characteristics such as age, admitting diagnosis(es), recent procedures, comorbidities, cognitive status, and medications.
 - b. Circumstances of the fall, such as location, what the patient was doing/attempting to do during the fall, whether the fall was witnessed by staff, whether the fall was assisted (if witnessed), and whether the patient was known to have hit their head during the fall.
 - c. Actual injury experienced by the patient and ongoing assessment or intervention that occurred.
- 2) Allow staff time to review the patient case information and identify specific factors that may inform their response to the fall.
- 3) Discuss the process of applying your hospital's policies to the patient case. If you have a step-by-step protocol to follow, you could work through that protocol using the patient case. Suggested additional questions to discuss include:
 - a. What are the very first steps you should take for this patient if you were the first one to respond following the fall?
 - b. How would you determine if immobilization of the cervical spine is indicated?
 - c. What do you need to assess before notifying the treating medical provider about the fall?
 - d. What would indicate the need for ongoing neurological assessment? What frequency of neurological assessment is needed?
 - e. Who else besides the treating medical provider needs to be notified about the fall?