

St. Francis Home, Tiffin

Intervention Key Words: Electric Beds, Gait Belts, Bladder Scanner

Industry: Health Care

Risk Factor(s): Awkward Postures-Back deviations, Neck and Shoulder deviations, Manual Handling-Lifting/Carrying, High Hand Force- Pinching/Gripping

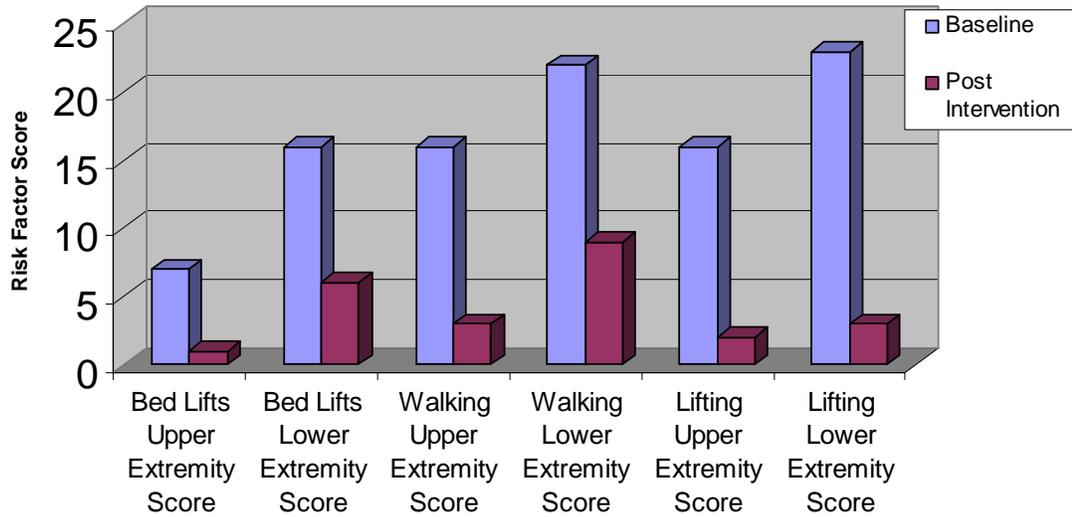
Situation:

St. Francis Home is a long-term health care facility that provides residential and skilled nursing services. Incidence of Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTDs) in nursing homes is growing steadily. St. Francis Home is no exception to this trend. Risk factors for CTDs stem from the repetitive, strenuous lifting required for patient transfers and the awkward postures required while performing them. One such example is that many nursing home beds are too low for proper lifting techniques. Either the beds are not adjustable or require cranking to achieve proper height. In order to save time and effort, many nurses find themselves attempting improper lifts that result in injuries. The inconsistent size and shape of the human form can also cause problems for nurses. In the event that a resident falls or is simply difficult to lift, nurses find that there are no suitable holding attachments on people. This results in very awkward body positioning in order to lift the resident. Another problem is that residents are often unnecessarily lifted, especially when they are incontinent. These risks accrue into a very expensive and dangerous situation for all parties involved.

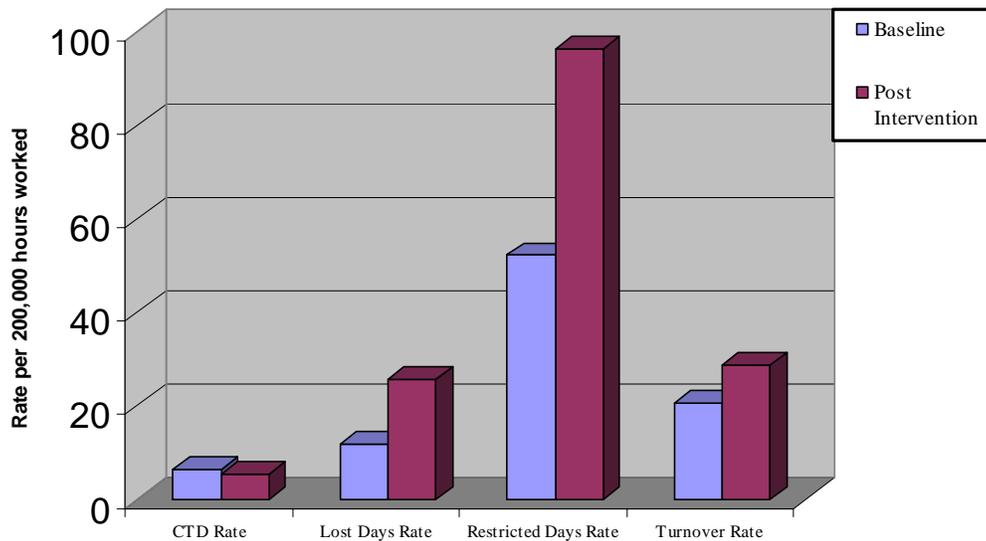
Solution:

St. Francis Home made three purchases to address their CTD issues. First, they bought 25 electric beds. This will enable an employee to function at optimal heights and reduce the employee bending, twisting, stooping, overextending and lifting. The home also purchased 185 gait belts. This will benefit both the employees and the residents. In 1997, the implementation of Gait belts was successfully introduced and resulted in a significant decrease in both resident and employee injuries in the areas of use. By purchasing 200 more belts, nurses will abide by a mandatory use policy in the hopes of reducing injuries throughout the remainder of the facility. Finally, St. Francis Home obtained a Bladder Scanner. This will allow the nursing assistants to check the condition of the resident's bladder and determine if a lift is necessary or not. This will also alleviate the constant changing of linens and subsequent twisting and bending by the employees. In turn, it may benefit the laundry employees, as they will have less laundry to clean. Recent studies show that the scanners can reduce as much as 200 lbs of laundry per day. Total cost for the intervention was \$42,592. The home received \$32,523 in assistance from SafetyGrant\$ to offset the costs.

Results:



- CTD Risk Factor scores, averaged over 3 tasks, decreased 76 % following the intervention.



- CTD rate (standardized per 200,000 hours worked) was at 6.4 the year prior to the intervention. The rate decreased to 5.4 over the 2 years following, a 16% improvement.
- Increases in Lost Days, Restricted Days and Employee Turnover rates were observed over the same time period.