

Tool 20a: Procedure for the use of measles chart/falls plotting

Introduction

A 'Measles Chart', is a large scale floor plan for a building that you use to plot where falls occur. A floor plan should be available from the maintenance department or the care home management group. Services use floor plans regularly for fire safety and maintenance purposes.

Used consistently it can reveal patterns of falls over time which in turn can identify 'danger zones' where falls most frequently occur. Used together with falls/accident/incident records, variables such as individuals involved, types of accident, times of day, and environmental factors can be analysed. The care home can then take action to minimise the risk of falls in these areas.

Procedure

1. Ideally the measles chart should be located in a prominent place where staff can observe patterns emerging
2. Use the measles chart together with an accident/incident record which records each accident/incident with a short individual reference number/code
3. When a fall or accident/incident occurs, place a small dot on the measles chart in the precise location of the incident. The dot must include the reference number/code or relate to a key which identifies numbered dots to specific recorded accidents/incidents
4. The accident/incident record should record details of the accident/incident including:
 - what activity was taking place, and how the accident/incident happened
 - any relevant health/functional factors
 - environmental factors such as lighting, floor covering, obstacles and hazards etc.

Analysis

Review the measles chart when patterns emerge or at least every six months along with the accident/incident records. A report should identify evidence of environmental factors that may be contributing to falls/accidents/incidents in specific areas with recommendations on action to reduce risks. This report should contribute to a regular environmental risk assessment, complete at least annually.

In addition to formal reviews, use the measles chart on an ongoing basis to address any identifiable risk factors that become apparent.

Summary – measles chart a tool for promoting falls prevention

- The measles chart is a visual means of monitoring falls.
- By involving staff in the use of the measles chart, you can use it as a tool for raising awareness and ownership of the need to reduce falls hazards.
- This could include designating responsibility for minimising risks in specific areas, reviewing procedures etc.
- The measles chart has potential to keep falls recording and prevention very visible and raise its profile among the multitude of complex tasks involved in providing care.
- It has a valuable role in the review of falls over time and in focusing action on environmental factors in particular.