Trusts stumble over NSF falls target

Targets set in the National Service Framework for Older People (NSF) to reduce injuries caused by falls may not be met, according to new research.

In a study designed to examine the prevalence and nature of fall prevention strategies within London’s acute and secondary care services, independent falls adviser Michael Hall found many were likely to fail standard six of the NSF. Standard six aims to reduce falls-related injuries and promote effective treatment and rehabilitation for people who do fall. April next year is the date set in the NSF for NHS services to implement such strategies.

The research, published in Nursing Standard, revealed that almost a third of London’s NHS organisations had no strategy in place and no plans to introduce one. It concludes: ‘While encouraging in certain respects, the survey suggests that compliance with standard six of the NSF requires significant improvement … This study showed no service was meeting the standard.’

Only 38 per cent of the 105 NHS organisations surveyed had a fall prevention strategy and although 34 per cent said they were developing them, 28 per cent said they were not using strategies or developing them.

But Mary Clay, a member of the RCN older people’s forum and a consultant nurse at St Mary’s NHS Trust, said much had changed in the two years since the research was undertaken. But she was confident that the April target would be met by her employers and said she was not aware of other trusts having problems.


At-risk groups ‘may miss out’ on flu vaccinations

The government’s annual flu vaccination campaign is underway again, with an uptake target of 70 per cent among those aged 65 and over.

But this year’s campaign, launched last month, began amid warnings that some at-risk groups were missing out on their flu jabs.

Launching the vaccination campaign, deputy chief medical officer Dr Pat Troop said that another mild winter last year could have lulled older people into a false sense of security over the dangers of flu. ‘It’s important to have an influenza vaccination each year,’ said Dr Troop. ‘The vaccination people had last year will not protect them this time around. Just because you didn’t get influenza last year doesn’t mean you won’t get it this year.’

Gordon Lishman, director general of Age Concern England, said: ‘Sadly, people die every year from flu and the overwhelming majority are older people. Most recent figures show 25,000 more people have died during the colder months compared with summer and 91 per cent of this figure have been over 65. Getting

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Older people who have become housebound can benefit from social services support even when they find it hard to acknowledge that they need it, new research has found. Contact with care services appears to have positive effects on levels of self-esteem and morale. Researchers in the Growing Older programme, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, suggest that care services managers should intervene as quickly as possible to help people who have recently suffered a decline in their autonomy. Further information from John Baldock, University of Kent at Canterbury. Tel: 01227 827574. Email: jcb4@ukc.ac.uk

National Service Frameworks: A Practical Aid to Implementation in Primary Care has been published by the Department of Health. These resource packs are designed to highlight the standards most relevant in primary care and how they can be implemented most effectively. Available from NHS Response Line: 08701 555 455 (order no 28270) and at www.doh.gov.uk/pricare/nsf.htm

The Ex-service Homes Referral Agency, which provides information and advice to ex-service personnel on care homes, housing issues and respite care, has been re-launched as part of the British Legion organisation.

The War Widows Pilgrimage Scheme, which pays for widows...