

A SURVEY OF INCONTINENCE PRODUCT USE IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Aims of Study

Little is known about the types or patterns of continence product use in nursing and residential homes in the United Kingdom. Such data are particularly important now that the UK National Health Service is responsible for the costs of products used in nursing homes (since 2001) as well as those in residential homes. This survey was the first of its kind to investigate the full range of continence products (e.g. catheters, sheaths, leg bags, urinals, disposable and washable absorbent products) being used in these settings. The survey provides information on what types of products are being used and if certain products are being over or under used. It also gives an indication on whether usage varies between different areas in the country and between different providers (i.e. NHS, local authority, private and voluntary sectors).

The aims of the study were

To describe the patterns of continence product use in residential settings for older people in the United Kingdom.

To collect information on the general use of incontinence products in residential settings

To provide valuable information for purchasers and providers of health care

To identify gaps in the market

To provide a knowledge base for future research projects.

Methods

3000 nursing and residential homes were randomly selected from the Laing and Buisson's review supplement 2000-2001 'Directory of Nursing and Residential Homes' on CD-rom. To obtain the sample the homes were divided into nursing, residential and dual registered homes. These were stratified into private sector, voluntary sector, NHS and Local Authority run homes. They were also stratified into small (5-15 beds), medium (16-39 beds) and large size homes (> 39 beds). The result of the stratification showed that the strata for NHS and Local Authority run nursing and dual registered homes, and NHS run residential homes were so small that it was decided to exclude those strata from the survey.

A structured, picture-based questionnaire was sent to 3016 Nursing and Residential homes for older people throughout the UK. The questionnaire comprised 11 questions on incontinence product use and was pilot tested in 5 nursing and residential homes in the London area before it was finalised. Questionnaires from 1519 (50.4%) homes were returned, of those 1441 (47.8%) were analysable.

Results

The completed questionnaires provided data on 1441 homes with a total of 45321 residents, of whom 26770 (59%) used continence products. Around 70% of nursing home residents and around 35% of residential home residents were reported to be using at least one continence product. Disposable bodyworn insert pads (medium/large) were the most common continence product. Bodyworn washable absorbent pads were much less popular and were seldom used in any sector. Disposable and washable chairpads were used in around 20% and 45% of homes respectively, despite their public display of incontinence.

Of the non-absorbent products, indwelling urethral catheters were the most commonly adopted and were used by 1-12% of residents, depending on sector and gender. A very few homes (50) had large numbers of residents (>25%) using indwelling catheters. Supra-pubic catheters and intermittent catheterisation were seen infrequently in all sectors.

Conclusions

This survey showed extensive use of continence products in all Nursing and Residential home sectors, but there is considerable variation in product use between sectors. Overall disposable absorbent bodyworn pads were the most commonly used products. Many homes could improve their management of incontinence by adjusting their product use in line with

current evidence. Practice recommendations and priorities for future continence product evaluations are proposed in the presentation.