

DOROTHY'S Story



CASE STUDY: Reducing the risk of bed falls and bed fall injury

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➤ Case Study:

Dorothy is a 93-year-old lady who lives alone and is supported by her family, who visit frequently, and carers that assist four times a day with personal care tasks, domestic tasks and mobility.

Dorothy has dementia, which has resulted in poor safety awareness and poor orientation to time and place. In addition, a recent stroke caused significant weakness throughout the left side of her body. Dorothy requires the support of one carer and a Zimmer frame for all mobility. Unfortunately, there are times that Dorothy will attempt to get out of bed when unattended, and since she is unable to mobilise alone, this often results in a fall.

Dorothy's family reported that they had significant concerns regarding Dorothy at night and requested that bed rails were provided. However, the OT service were aware of the increased risk due to Dorothy's confusion and did not feel this was appropriate. They provided a low bed with a mattress platform height of 200 mm and a crash mat. The family monitored Dorothy's night-time behaviour over a four-week period and reported their findings, which they gathered each morning. On five occasions Dorothy was found on the crash mat, on five occasions half of Dorothy's body was in the bed and half out, on six occasions she had been found in bed on their arrival and the rest of the time the family found Dorothy sat up sitting on the edge of the bed. The family were very concerned about the risk of injury and wished to explore further interventions.

➤ Results:

A FloorBed was put into place for a trial and was set at the lowest point of 70 mm from the ground when Dorothy was assisted into bed each night. Since the FloorBed has been in place, Dorothy has not fallen out of the bed. Each morning, the family find Dorothy lying safely on her bed.

The family have also reported that they are aware that Dorothy's behaviours can be inconsistent, however they feel reassured that should Dorothy roll out of bed at any time, the risk of injury is minimal as the low height reduces the impact significantly.