Take the load off with Weighted Blankets

Courtney Allford
Clinical Nurse Consultant
Background

- Therapeutic intervention
- Mainly used during:
  - Crisis intervention
  - Preparatory purposes
  - Sensory modulation
  - Purposeful activity
- The blankets consist of a heavy cotton calico insert covered with a 100% cotton drill cover. Removable weight bags are made from plastic pellets and weigh approximately 120g each.
Therapeutic Goals

- To facilitate self-care, self-nurturance, reality orientation and the development of one's coping skills
- To provide tactile or sensory experiences
- To provide comfort and self-care
- To reduce anxiety, agitation, and facilitate sleeping patterns
Therapeutic Outcomes

• Relief from the negative effects of anxiety and agitation
• An increased sense of well being and self control
• Positive sleeping patterns
• A decrease in the number of reported falls
Indications for use

- Reducing high levels of anxiety and aggression
- Decrease restraint
- Reduce falls
- Resident experiencing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD) such as:
  - Aggressive behaviour
  - Restlessness
  - Agitation and restlessness which affects their sleep patterns
  - Frustration
Who will benefit?

- Residents or clients with dementia
- Residents who have anxiety or agitation
- Residents who have abnormal sleeping patterns or difficulty settling at night.
- Restlessness at night
- High falls residents
How serious are falls?

- Falls are a common adverse event in residential aged care (RAC) settings.
- Fifty percent of residents fall in a 12 month period (Shaw, 2007).
- Over a half of falls result in an injury, and around a third result in a fracture (Kallin, 2002).
Assessment Process

• Referral to CNC/CN or RN.
• Initial assessments;
  – Skin Integrity (Braden)
  – Falls history and FRAT
  – Continence
  – Sleep Assessment
  – Behaviour charts
  – Nutrition and hydration
  – Medications
  – Pain Assessment
  – Height and weight
**Weighted Blanket Assessment Checklist**

The CNC/CN/RN to complete the assessment for all care resident's prior to the use of a weighted blanket to assess suitability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname:</th>
<th>Given Name:</th>
<th>DOB:</th>
<th>Age:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex:</td>
<td>Site/Service:</td>
<td>DOA:</td>
<td>Room No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Completed By:</td>
<td>Referral from:</td>
<td>Height:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weight:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assessments

- Pain Assessment □
- Bowel Chart □
- Sleep Assessment □
- Behaviour Chart □ (iCARE)
- Weight Chart □
- Swallow Screen □
- Skin Integrity (Braden Scale) □
- Medication Profile
- Diagnoses and co-morbidities
- FRAT
- Falls History
- Continence
- Nutrition and Hydration

### Outcome of Assessment
Trial Implementation

- Consent attained

- Implementation plan completed using the individual session guide (daytime and night time use)

- Data is recorded for a 7 days;
  - Sleep Chart
  - Behaviour chart
  - Clinical Incident database
A clinical incident is an event or circumstance resulting from health care which could have, or did lead to unintended harm to a person, loss or damage, and/or a complaint.

Clinical incidents include:
- **Near misses** — incidents that may have, but did not cause harm; and
- **Adverse events** - an incident in which harm resulted to a person. Harm includes death, disease, injury, suffering and/or disability.
Reportable Incidents

Incident Types

Please indicate incident types:

- Medication Administration Incident
- Pharmacy Dispensing Incident
- Fall Incident
- Behaviour Incident
- Pressure Ulcer Incident
- Skin Tear Incident
- Other Wound Type
- Infection Incident
- Nutrition Incident
- Sentinel Event
- Other Hospital Transfer

Proceed
Evaluation of data

- Weighted blanket evaluation form;
  - Sleep
  - Falls
  - Behaviour and well being
  - Residents reaction
The effects of the Weighted Blanket on Sleep

The chart shows the number of hours slept by each resident before and during the use of the weighted blanket. The dots represent the number of hours slept during weighted blanket use, while the squares represent the number of hours slept prior to the implementation of the weighted blanket. The chart indicates that the weighted blanket had a positive effect on sleep quality and duration for all residents.
The effects of the Weighted Blanket on Falls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Prior to Weighted Blanket Implementation</th>
<th>During Weighted Blanket Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The effects of the Weighted Blanket on Behaviour

- Resident A
- Resident B
- Resident C
- Resident D
- Resident E
- Resident F
- Resident G

Number of Report Incidents

- During Weighted Blanket Use
- Prior to Weighted Blanket implementation
Resident Reaction

- Positive: 72%
- Neutral: 14%
- Negative: 14%
Other positive effects

- Tactile stimulation
- Temperature
- Weight
- Visual
Contraindications

- There is currently not enough evidence
- Some of these include:
  - Trauma history
  - A history of respiratory complications
  - Cardiac/circulatory history
  - Impaired skin integrity including: Open wounds or fragile skin
  - Extreme Temperature
Weighted Blanket demonstration
In Summary

• The weighted blankets are effective in reducing high levels of anxiety and aggression, decreasing falls, improving sleep patterns and providing comfort and self care.

• Assessment is necessary to ensure that they are not contraindicated

• Always monitor the effectiveness to ensure that adverse effects do not become evident.
References

• OT innovations http://www.ot-innovations.com/content/view/33/46/


Acknowledgements

• All the residents and staff within the organisation who participated in the trial.

• All family members who encouraged the use of the Weighted blankets.
Thank You

Questions are guaranteed in life; Answers aren't.