Fall Risk Associated with Multi-Layer Compression Wrap Therapy in Venous Leg Ulcers

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Problem

• Multilayer compression wrapping (MLCW) of the lower extremities is the standard of care for venous leg ulcer (VLU) treatment. MLCW can result in the need for post-op shoe, and may affect balance and gait.

• In an outpatient wound center, we report 11 cases of falls with MLCW and post-op shoe

Background

• VLU affect 1% of the population over 60 years old.
• Over 1/3 of persons living at home age 65 fall each year.
• Falls result from interactions between predisposing and precipitating factors in the environment.
• Falls in the geriatric population have been attributed to unsafe footwear, use of restrictive devices, gait disturbance and balance issues.
• Reducing patient falls is one of the National Patient Safety Goals.

Intervention

• Implement “Get Up and Go” fall risk evaluation for MLCW patients
• Referral to PT for assistive devices / therapy / balance program
• Use of low-profile MLCW * to allow normal shoe-wear

“Get–Up and Go” Test

1. Stand up from a chair
2. Walk 3 meters
3. Turn around
4. Walk back
5. Sit down

Score

1 = normal
2 = slightly abnormal
3 = mildly abnormal
4 = moderately abnormal
5 = very abnormal

Description

Retrospective chart review of VLU pts. 2003-2006
N = 374 Total VLU pts >60 yo with MLCW and post-op shoe
Reported Falls = 11
Mean Age = 78
Community dwelling = 11
History Prior falls = 3
Duration of wear before fall = 2 weeks
Reported falls w/ low profile MLCW* in 6 months = 0

Conclusions

• Fall risk is multi-dimensional and may be associated with MLCW as a factor
• Fall risk assessment, education and referral should accompany MLCW therapy for VLU
• A low-profile MLCW that allows for the use of normal shoe wear may reduce falls
• Additional research into the relationships between MLCW and gait, balance, ROM and shoe wear is needed

References:


* 3M™ Coban™ 2 Layer Compression System

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