

PREVENTING MANUAL HANDLING OF RESIDENTS IN A CARE HOME

Organisation

Refugium, n. o.

Introduction

Manual handling of elderly and/or seriously ill patients/residents is a problem in nursing or residential care homes. This intervention was to establish and run a “home for elderly and sick persons” in the Trenčín region that complied with the health and safety at work issues. The idea was developed as early as 1996. A civil association, “Refugium n.o.”, was set up in 1999 with a view to practical implementation of this objective. The project was completed in 2005.

Aims

The aim of this intervention was to establish and run a “home for elderly and sick persons” in the Trenčín region that met all the health and safety at work (HSW) criteria for working with elderly or seriously ill persons.

What was done, and how

At the preparation stage and throughout the reconstruction, due account was taken of all the criteria for working with elderly and/or seriously ill persons in healthcare facilities. Special attention was given to providing adjustable beds, wheelchairs, walking frames, hygiene accessories (lifts, bathtub seats, raised toilet seats) and a bathing bed.

Documentation on health and safety at work and fire protection was drawn up as a next step after completing the final inspection approval and putting the building into use in 2005.

All staff members of Refugium n. o. received training and instruction. Written records were kept on training and instruction with staff members signing to confirm that they had received and understood the information concerning health and safety at work and fire protection.

Documentation on health and safety at work was drawn up by a certified safety technician. It included the concept of HSW policy and the timetable for implementation, instructions on the provision of first aid in case of accidents or other health emergencies, guidelines on the minimum safety and health requirements for work with display screen equipment, and guidelines concerning administrative workplaces and administrative tasks.

A detailed analysis and opinion concerning the risk involved in the manual handling of loads was also drawn up with due regard to the needs of

comprehensive nursing and medical care for patients with the most severe health problems, handling of immobile patients at mealtimes, personal hygiene, treatment, and positioning on beds. The work involves manual handling of patients several times a day – lifting, carrying, placing, supporting, pushing, and pulling a wheelchair.

Staff members are regularly instructed in the use of devices they have at their disposal to carry out their work tasks.

Management staff of Refugium n. o. regularly monitor compliance with relevant safety regulations. Refugium n. o. organises entrance medical examinations and induction training for newly recruited staff. On-the-job periodical training sessions and periodical medical examinations are carried out in accordance with relevant documentation. Refugium n. o. is assisted by the occupational health service, a lecturer and a certified safety technician to address the issues related to health and safety at work.



Figure 1 Sanitary room

What was achieved

The establishment was built as a new facility with state-of-the-art equipment and barrier-free access.

The result has shown that a facility equipped with helpful devices:

- significantly increases work effectiveness and enhances the safety of handling patients and residents;
- improves work climate;
- reduces the occurrence of symptoms indicating musculoskeletal problems.

The costs of technical equipment for patient handling were part of the primary investment.

Further information

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Transferability

This is an approach that could be utilised in the building or refurbishment of care homes throughout Slovakia and in other member states. This approach would also be applicable to hospitals and other health and social care settings.