

# Does patient room proximity to the nurse station influence pediatric falls?

Alison Spicer, BSN, RN  
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## Problem/Objective

Patient falls are cited as avoidable events by Joint Commission. Patient Safety efforts that reduce falls and falls with injury enhance the care environment. It is a nursing tradition to assign patients who have fallen or are a fall-risk to a hospital room nearest to the nursing station. Yet, the benefit of the tradition is not highlighted in the literature.

- The objective was to determine the potential association between falls and proximity to nursing station.
- The hypothesis was that pediatric patients assigned to rooms closest to the station have fewer falls than those in rooms further away from the station.

## Methods

This retrospective study examined a 2 year fall history in acute pediatrics, at an academic medical center. The study evaluated the relationship between patient room proximity to nursing station and incidence of patient falls.

- Names and dates of falls obtained from the Quality Office were linked to patient bed placement lists.
- Descriptive statistics, correlations and proportions were used to examine the data.

## Results

- Twenty-eight falls were reported over the 2 year time period on the acute care pediatric floor.
- The fall rate was 1.5/1000 patient days.
- Age: Mean = 7.5, SD = 5.6, median = 6.5, range 1 – 19 years
- Twenty-five percent of the sample had a Hematology/Oncology diagnosis
- Fall Distance (feet from nursing station) : Mean = 28.7, SD = 13.5, median = 25.1, range 11.4 – 53.8 feet
- The majority of falls (64%) occurred within 40 feet of the station.

Distance from nurses station (feet)	Number of falls
0-20	9
20-40	9
40-60	6
≥60	4

## Conclusions

Unexpectedly, falls tended to occur in rooms closer to the station. One assumption is that fall-risk patients were identified and assigned to rooms closer to the station. Additional strategies must be explored to address falls during pediatric hospitalization.

Proximity to the nursing station does not prevent falls.



University of Virginia Health System  
Charlottesville, VA

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