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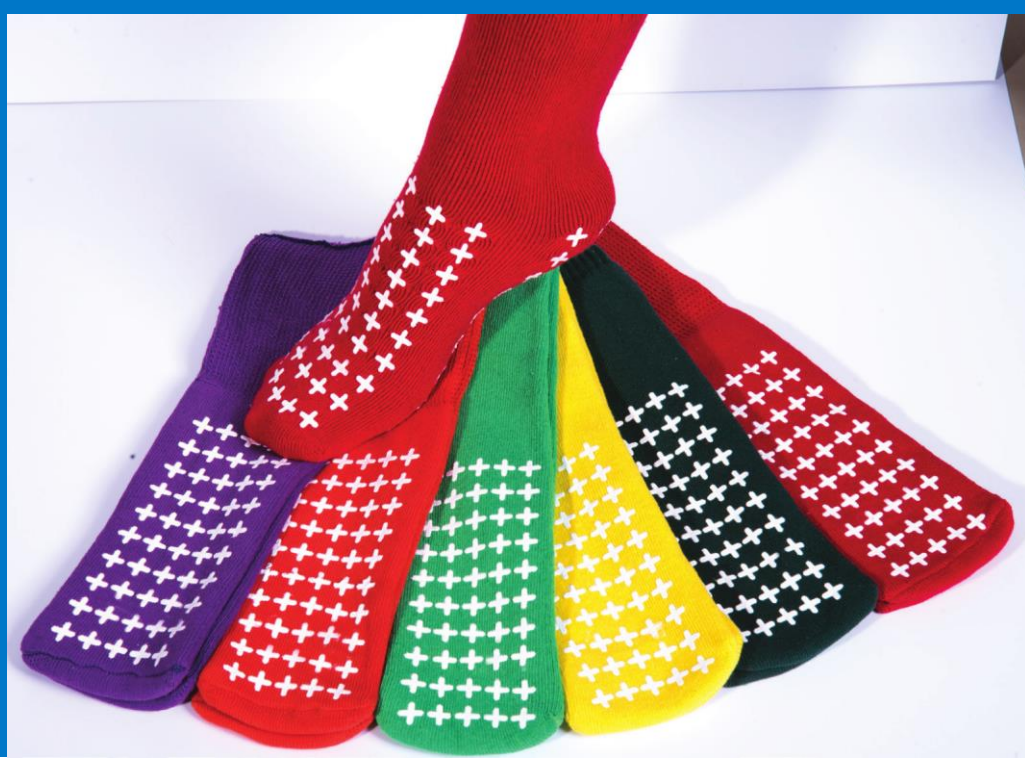
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Are Non-slip Socks the Best Way to Prevent Falls?

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Background

Falls are an unfortunate but common event for hospitalized patients. On average, 700,000-1,000,000 people in the US fall in the hospital each year. Patients who fall are at risk for serious injuries such as fractures, lacerations, and even death. These injuries can be life altering and subsequent injuries from falls can also lead to financial consequences for the hospital, since Medicare and Medicaid Services do not reimburse for certain injuries (AHRQ, 2023). Falls are the leading cause of preventable injuries for the hospitalized patient. Many hospitals utilize tool-kits and protocols with multiple interventions to help decrease the risk of falls (Dykes, et al., 2020).

Introduction

In hospitalized adults over the age of 65 (Population), what is the effect of non-slip socks (Intervention) compared to other footwear (Comparison), in the prevention of falls (Outcome)?

Purpose

A common fall prevention intervention for patients is wearing non-slip socks. Is this common practice the most beneficial way to prevent inpatient falls?



Methods

A literature review was conducted, reviewing articles related to the specific intervention of non-slip socks on the hospitalized older adult and its effect on falls.

Results

- Previous studies have associated mobilization in foot conditions other than shoes (slippers, sandals, socks, bare-feet and other 'non-ideal' foot conditions) with increased risk of falling. The poorer relative performance of non-slip socks do not represent an adequate alternative to well-fitting rubber soled footwear (Jazayer, Heng, Slade, Seymour, Lui, Volpe, Jones, & Morris, 2020).
- Bare feet provide better slip resistance than non-slip socks and therefore might represent a safer foot condition. This study did not explore whether traction provided by bare feet was comparable to 'optimal' footwear such as shoes. However, previous studies have associated barefoot mobilization with increased falls (Chari, Haines, Varghese, & Economidis, 2009).

Conclusion

There is inconclusive evidence to support non-slip socks as the best way to prevent falls. Non-slip socks do not have a supportive sole, ankle support, and, depending on the size available, may not be form fitting. These properties have the potential to cause older adults to fall (Chari, et al., 2009). Non-slip socks also increase the risk of infection for hospitalized patients as they carry around whatever bacteria is on the hospital floor. To optimize fall prevention, patients own shoes should be worn while in the hospital.



Next Steps

Footwear from home should be considered as an alternative option to non-slip socks. The interprofessional healthcare team should continue to promote individualized safety measures to prevent falls. More research is needed (Jazayer, et al., 2020).

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