

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SPECIALISED SEATING FOR RESIDENTS IN LONG TERM CARE**

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**Brief Description of Research or Project:** Clinical evidence and experience is suggestive that current wheelchair and seating provision is not meeting the needs of elderly residents in long term care, compromising their comfort, postural and pressure care needs. This presentation explores the impact of specialized seating assessment and provision on the needs of elderly in long term care. The research examines the impact of specialized seating on pressure ulcer incidence, comfort, posture and function amongst other variables. It will identify the key principles of correct positioning, seating and mobility and the influence this can have on the health of older people. **Why is this research important to profile at the Research Day 2014?** As people age many are affected with physical illnesses and neurological conditions that are associated with deterioration in physical ability, function and wellbeing. Older people are considered to be the fastest growing population group and it is not unusual for seating needs to emerge. The research presentation disseminates the results of clinical trials carried out over the last 2 years, which examined the effect that seating assessments and provision of suitable specialized chairs had on a large group of patients in long term care settings when compared to a control group using their existing chairs. A team from the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland independently carried out this study which was granted ethical approval from the university and ORECNI. The study showed that pressure ulcers reduced by 88% in the group using specialized chairs while the incidence increased by 5% in the control group. The group using specialized chairs also experienced increased functional ability, decreased staff time in postural correction and significant increases in blood oxygen levels. Economists from the University of Ulster Business School then studied the impact this could have on healthcare budgets. They calculated that if a hospital or care home were to provide an assessment and specialized chair and replicate these results with every patient, they could save a significant amount of their related pressure ulcer costs. This research provides clinical evidence and guidelines for the assessment and provision of specialized seating within long term care settings.