

PERSONAL CARE BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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Brief Description of Research or Project: Best Practice Guidelines have become an international health care phenomenon as they aim to improve quality with the best available evidence. Currently, many best practice guidelines exist for nurses in long-term care (LTC), however no best practice guidelines to date have been developed specifically for personal care providers. As nurses in long-term care provide less personal care to residents, personal care providers have become increasingly responsible for this critical area of expertise. Personal Support Workers (PSWs) in LTC often participate in quality improvement initiatives, yet most are not guided by a continuous supply of evolving research in personal care. The number of missed research opportunities in personal care is alarming. In response to this need, the Ontario Personal Support Worker Association and its national counterpart are launching their "Personal Care Best Practice Guidelines" Program. Each best practice guideline provides clear and concise information about each specific task and is supported by a "best policy template" to facilitate knowledge to action implementation. Reviews of products and equipment, tips for reducing time and step-by-step illustrations will ensure PSWs have every opportunity to improve their practice of bathing, toileting, transferring, feeding, and dressing. Family members and other informal care givers will also benefit from this resource, as it can serve as a common reference to inform discussions and decisions about care. **Why is this research important to profile at the Research Day 2014?** This topic is very important to profile at LTC Research Day 2014, as it speaks to the need for additional research and consensus building in the area of personal care. Personal care providers provide up to 80% of the care provided in long-term care, and yet most of their work has not been evaluated to identify best practices in practice effectiveness nor time and cost efficiencies. Evidence from the lived and worked experience of PSWs will be highlighted in the presentation; giving credit to those most responsible for the development of Personal Care Best Practice Guideline content. We also expect to feature the guidelines in the Tools & Resources section of the conference. When efficiencies can be made in personal care, time is available to improve quality and reduce risk. Benchmarking quality, in particular, is facilitated by the launch of Personal Care Best Practice Standards. This innovation should be evaluated in terms of its cost-effectiveness, which is also an important endeavour we wish to highlight to researchers attending the conference.