

Ethical Choices for the Physical Restraint of Residents in Long-Term Care Facilities

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Abstract

Few studies have been conducted on the use of physical restraint in long-term care facilities. Furthermore, none have provided any suggestions for handling ethical dilemmas. Given that the implementation of a “restraint-free care environment” requires an assessment of the measures of physical restraint that involves both the professionals and the kin to arrive at a decision, social workers play a role in this critical issue. Referring to the literature on restraint use from the perspective of medical care, this paper examines definitions and current restraint practices (and their prevalence), for residents of long-term care facilities. Furthermore, taking legal and ethical dilemmas related to restraint use into consideration from the viewpoint of social workers, this study provides suggestions for those facing such dilemmas in long-term care institutions.

Keywords: Physical Restraint, Ethical Dilemma, the Choices for Ethical Decision-making, Long-term Care Facilities