1. Problem
Observation of poor inconsistent position of patient’s arm for patients who had suffered significant paralysis following a stroke. Approximately 70% of stroke patients have altered arm function (RCP, 2012).

Evidence
Shoulder pain prevalence estimates as high as 84%, occurring from 2 weeks to several months (NICE, 2013).
Good arm position can help to prevent pain, contractures, pressure problems and respiratory complications (RCP, 2012).

2. Size of problem
On average 10 out of 36 patients require good arm positioning. Almost 1/3 stroke ward patients.

3. Aim
All patients unable to independently move their stroke hand to their mouth to have their arm positioned correctly whilst in bed.

4. Baseline Measure
5 point checklist scale (Yes/No) developed from SIGN management of stroke guidelines (2010).

5. PDSA Summary

ACT
- Purposeful education

PLAN
- Identify the problem areas

STUDY
- 3/5 achieved, with only 41% scored 100% (5/5)

DO
- Measure hourly for one day

#5a

ACT
- Best Guide poster above patients bed & in newsletter

#5b

PLAN
- Assess effect of purpose education

STUDY
- Even sections & 3/5 scored, position lasted up to 2hrs

DO
- Repeat measure for a day

#5c

ACT
- Recommend similar specialist cushion

PLAN
- Assess effect of specialist cushion

STUDY
- 1 part of cushion used. Improved ave score to 4.6/5

DO
- Used specialist cushion for 1 week & measure

6. Intervention
Best Practice Guide to Positioning the Affected Arm
1. Trunk straight and in midline
2. Affected Shoulder protracted
3. Affected Shoulder abducted (aligned with body)
4. Affected Arm bought forward
5. Fingers extended (SIGN 2010)

My arm is more comfortable in this position

7. Results
= Mean score of all patients, out of 5 points from Best Practice Guide

8. Summary
Staff more aware of the good arm position, with each section evenly scored and 4 out of 5 points achieved. Specialist cushions might promote better positioning of the stroke arm.

9. Lessons Learnt
1) Developing a clear aim which is patient outcome focused, enables clear understanding of the project to all stakeholders.
2) Effective measures take time and effort to refine and define and are important for the direction and outcome of the project.

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References