



Restraint Use in Older Adults

A restraint is any device or medication used to restrict a patient's movement. For example, soft wrist restraints may be used in the intensive care unit to prevent patients from removing medical equipment such as catheters. Medication is considered a restraint if it is used to subdue a patient who is being aggressive.



INDICATIONS



TYPES OF RESTRAINTS

CHEMICAL



PHYSICAL



ENVIRONMENTAL



1. Restraints can be used if it is necessary to prevent severe bodily harm to the patient or to another person. They may be applied in an emergency situation where danger is imminent.
2. The preferred choice is to use no restraints. A physical, chemical or environmental restraint should not be used as a substitute for safe and well-designed environments or for the proper care and management.
3. An inappropriate use of restraints occurs if they are misused or used too often. Restraints should never be used as punishment, as a substitute for nursing care, or as a matter of convenience for the health care provider.

RISKS

Chemical and physical restraints are associated with an increase in confusion, falls, decubitus ulcers, and length of stay. Restraints can cause serious injuries, and even death due to asphyxiation.