

BHTA Get Wise Poster

The British Health Care Trade Association (BHTA) have published a wide range of “Get Wise” leaflets for end users and carers, to help them make the better choices regarding assistive equipment. This poster outlines the role of the BHTA, and Get Wise leaflets on both Posture and Pressure.

The aim of the “Get Wise” leaflet series is to provide simple and easy to understand information and tips to users, and their carers. In particular, the “Get Wise to Pressure Ulcer Prevention in Sitting” leaflet aims to provide simple tips on how to reduce the risk of pressure ulcers development, and what to look out for, while “Get Wise to Good Seated Posture” provides tips on supporting good posture.

Background

Achieving good seated posture is vital for health and wellbeing. Freedom of movement, imperative for function, is achieved through effective stabilisation of the pelvis and trunk (Green & Nelham 1991). Stability in sitting can reduce the influence of abnormal muscle tone and reflexes on the body, and ultimately manage comfort and energy levels (Cook & Hussey 2002). Asymmetrical postures, including spinal deformities, can even impact on physiological function. Without appropriate postural management, an individual is at risk of reduced independence, discomfort, and fatigue, and is at an increased risk of health complications. Ultimately, they are likely to experience limited quality of life.

Posture and pressure are inextricably linked. Body posture has a direct influence on the pressure going through specific body sites (Sprigle & Sonenblum 2011). The body can only withstand high interface pressures for a very short period of time, and it is when the pressure is not regularly redistributed that pressure ulcers can develop (Waterlow 2007). The impact of a pressure ulcer on a person’s quality of life is significant, with them being affected physically, psychologically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and financially (Langemo 2005). Pressure ulcers in older patients are associated with a fivefold increase in mortality (Grey & Harding 2006). The Health & Social Care Information Centre stated in their NHS Safety Thermometer (2015) report that, on average, 2,000 pressure ulcers are newly acquired each month within the NHS in England; the cost to the NHS of treating these pressure ulcers and related conditions is up to £4 billion a year (Royal College of Nursing & NHS England 2013).

Combine the above with the associated human suffering, there is a clear need to raise awareness of the importance of postural management and pressure care, and ultimately educate those it impacts. The British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA) has over 500 member companies manufacturing and/or selling healthcare and assistive technology products that help people live more independently, ultimately improving their quality of life. This includes many working in the field of wheelchairs and seating. All member companies sign up to a Code of Practice (BHTA 2015), approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI). This demonstrates their commitment to high standards that go beyond their legal obligations. The aim is to give both professional and lay customers confidence, and peace of mind.

The Get Wise series of leaflets is part of the BHTA’s commitment to raise awareness and educate end users and their carers on how to get the best out of their equipment. These leaflets are available as a resource for BHTA Members to supplement the provision of any required training or tuition, as expected under the BHTA Code of Practice. They are also available for use by Clinical Professionals to supplement information and guidance they give to clients using wheelchair or static seating.

This poster will introduce the role of BHTA in providing a Code of Conduct to manufacturers and other providers of assistive technology. In particular, the poster will introduce the Get Wise Leaflet Series, and the “Get Wise to Pressure Ulcer Prevention in Sitting” and “Get Wise to Seated Posture” Leaflets. These leaflets have been put together by a group of representatives from the BHTA member organisations, specialising in clinical seating, posture and pressure care. Contributors have backgrounds in Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Ergonomics, Marketing and Sales, with many years combined clinical seating experience.

The development and contents of the leaflets will be explained, including key clinical references used to support facts and advice given. The poster will also share key tips and information points highlighted in the leaflets, and signpost where to obtain copies for use in clinics.

References

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