

Resident Well-Being and Quality of Care in Long-Term Care Facilities During COVID-19 by Regional Health Authority

Objective

To determine whether there was a deterioration in physical or mental health in residents of long-term care facilities (LTCFs) by Regional Health Authority (RHA) during the first three months of COVID-19.

Practice Points

1. The vast majority of residents of LTCFs are extremely or totally dependent for the activities of daily living and/or have severe/very severe cognitive impairment. In addition, over 25% die every year.
2. Social engagement with family and close friends is very important to their quality of life, but during COVID-19, this engagement was prohibited to protect residents from becoming infected with the virus. This isolation commenced around 18 Mar 2020.

Methods

1. The Resident Assessment Instrument (RAI) questionnaire is completed every quarter (Q) by health care providers in LTCFs, and patient level data was obtained from the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI).
2. The data for the pre-COVID-19 era Q4 of 2019–20 (1 Jan – 31 Mar 2020) were compared to that from the first three months of the COVID-19 era: Q1 2020–21 (1 Apr – 30 Jun 2020). There were 2,454 questionnaires completed in Q1 2020–21, 1,391 in Eastern Health (EH), 513 in Central Health (CH), 421 in Western Health (WH), and 129 in Labrador-Grenfell Health (LGH).

Results

- Compared to Apr – Jun 2019, during COVID-19 for the same quarter in 2020, there was a reduction in admissions of 26.5% (N=191).
- During COVID-19, there was no change in health instability, dependence for the activities of daily living, or severity of cognitive impairment of residents in the first three months of COVID-19, when analyzed by the province or RHA.

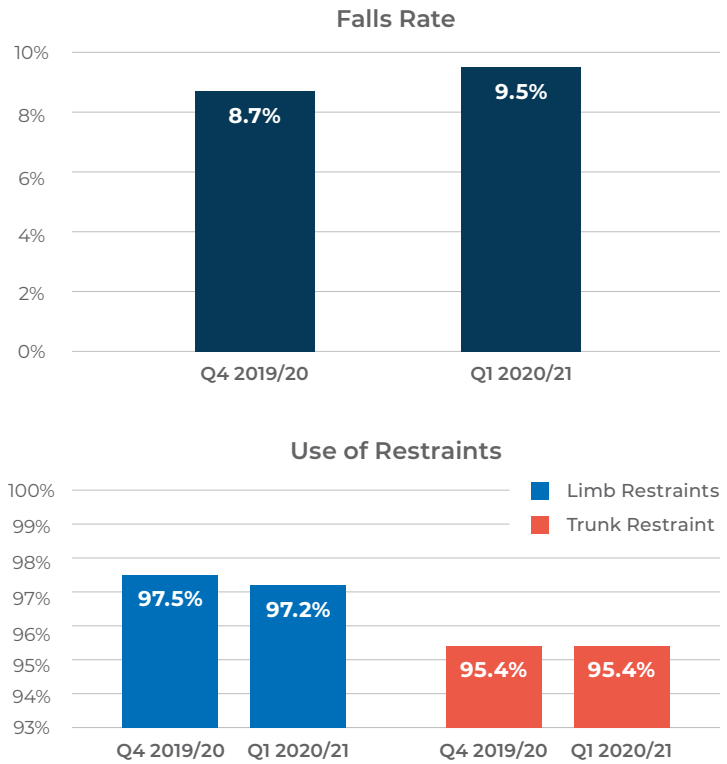


Figure 1. The Rate of Falls and the Use of Restraints in NL Before and During COVID-19

- There was a 9% increase in the rate of falls, and the use of restraints was unchanged in the province during COVID-19.

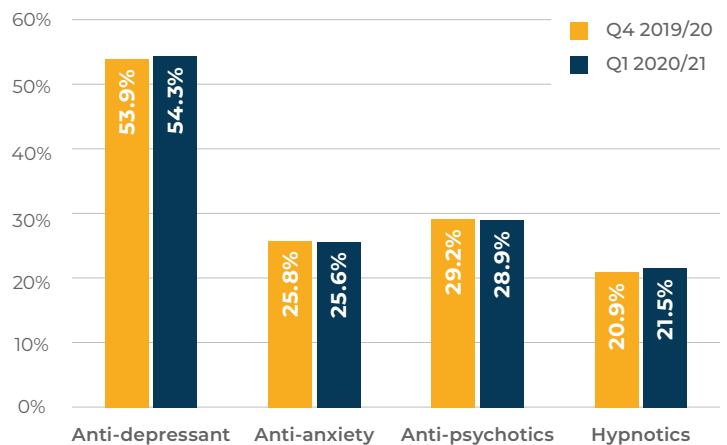


Figure 2. Use of Psychotropic Drugs in NL Before and During COVID-19

- There was no change in the use of anti-depressants, anti-anxiety drugs, anti-psychotic drugs or hypnotics in the province during COVID-19.

Table 1. Experiences of Residents in LTCFs With No Statistically or Clinically Significant Change in the First Three Months of COVID-19

Experiences of Residents in LTCFs in the First Three Months of COVID-19	
• More severe pain	• Pressure Ulcer
• Activities of daily living	• Behaviour
• Bladder continence	• Cognitive ability
• Communication	• Delirium
• Locomotion	• Distress
• Repetitive speech	• Persistent anger, self deprecation, fear
• Repetitive complaints	• Sleep
• Loss of interest	• Mood persistent/worsening
• Wandering	• Verbally abusive
• Sad, apathetic, or anxious appearance	

- Bowel continence worsened during COVID-19 (22%), compared to pre-COVID-19 (18.4%) ($p=0.05$).
- Percentage in whom pain worsened was lower during COVID-19 (7.9%), compared to pre-COVID-19 (9.4%) ($p=0.001$).
- Wandering behaviour that was not easily altered was lower during COVID-19 (9.1%), compared to pre-COVID-19 (10.7%) ($p=0.05$).

Conclusions

1. During COVID-19, admissions to LTCFs were reduced by 27% compared to 2019.
2. Initial analysis of clinical status, clinical events, use of psychotropic drugs, or other metrics of physical and mental health did not indicate a deterioration during the first three months of COVID-19 for residents of LTCFs.