The evaluation of a tool to measure the success of patient handling interventions using field trials across the EU

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THE EVALUATION OF A TOOL TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF PATIENT HANDLING INTERVENTIONS; USING FIELD TRIALS ACROSS THE EU.

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Aims: 
Previous research has found limited evidence for the benefits of patient handling interventions and poor levels of evidence for the reduction of work-related MSDs in healthcare. The Intervention Evaluation Tool (IET) is a complex performance measurement tool that evaluates the management systems for patient handling risk management. This paper describes field trials and the evaluation of the IET in 4 EU countries.

Methods:
The development of the IET has been previously published (Fray and Hignett, 2009). Data from focus groups were coded using thematic and content analysis and integrated with a preference list from the group participants (9 countries, 44 participants), to give a ranked list of preferred outcomes. The IET was developed utilising the most suitable measurement tools (Downs and Black 1998, Robson et al 2007) for each of the 12 most preferred outcomes. The IET was translated, and used in field trials in 2 ward areas in 4 EU countries (UK, Finland, Italy, Portugal). A peer-review panel, consisting of 16 experts from the European Panel for Patient Handling Ergonomics, was also completed for member checking of the evidence found in the field trials.

Results:
The IET was successful in collecting suitable data for 11/12 sections the financial data was not available at ward level. The IET calculation was used to identify differences in performance between the different locations with mixed success. Improvements for the data collection process were identified in all field trials and will be included in future developments. Some weaknesses were recorded with the musculoskeletal workload measure (Section 10) and the limitations of single point prevalence musculoskeletal health measures were also noted.

Conclusion:
The IET process was successful in collecting information from field trials in 4 EU countries. The individual IET scores showed differences in performance in 11/12 sections. Improvements in process and format were recorded for further development.
The IET performance scores allow an organisation to tailor its intervention strategy to improve specific outcomes. It is designed to be used as a pre-post intervention comparison process but large scale use could develop benchmarking scores to assist in the improvement of patient handling management systems across Europe.

Keywords: Health care workers, intervention studies, intervention methods

References: