

Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

Many Nursing Homes & Assisted Living Facilities Continue To Threaten The Safety Of Their Patients With The Use Of Bed Rails In Their Facilities

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To many, the use of bed rails on a hospital bed provides an added level of safety to prevent falls for patients who may be in a weakened physical state. While use the of bed rails may be appropriate in certain situations, research tells us that bed rails are still significantly overused and can endanger patients by allowing them to become entrapped in a gaps created between the rail and the side of the mattress. The entrapment risk can quickly kill a patient within minutes.

[The New York Times recently reported on potential dangers associated with the unnecessary use of bed rails](#) in the nursing home setting. The Time article cites Steven Miles, a geriatrician and bioethicist at the University of Minnesota who has studied the usage of bed rails amongst the elderly.

"Rails decrease your risk of falling by 10 to 15 percent, but they increase the risk of injury by about 20 percent because they change the geometry of the fall," Miles notes.

Information regarding the dangers of bed rails has lead to a reduction of their usage-- now, less than 10% of nursing home patients have beds with bed rails. Nonetheless, the lack of manufacturing guidelines when it comes to gaps between the mattress and the rails, continues to expose patients to an unnecessary risk.

I continue to see safety problems involving the use of mismatched mattresses and bed frames in some nursing homes and hospitals. I recently worked on a case involving the asphyxiation of a patient where a new mattress was used on

Jonathan Rosenfeld represents victims of nursing home abuse and neglect throughout the country. For more information please visit Nursing Homes Abuse Blog (www.nursinghomesabuseblog.com), Bed Sore FAQ (www.bedsorefaq.com) or call Jonathan directly at (888) 424-5757.

a bed frame more than 20 years old-- creating a gap of more than 8 inches between the mattress and the railing. Rather than replace the entire bedding set-up, the nursing home had apparently tried to save some money and replace the mattress alone.

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[How To Measure Bed Rail Gaps: A Video](#)

[Nursing Homes Curtail Use Of Physical Restraints With Residents](#)

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