



Hywel Dda UHB Withybush General Hospital Pembrokeshire



Withybush General Hospital, based in Haverfordwest, provides acute care across Pembrokeshire to a population with high numbers of older people. Hospital admissions have been rising steadily for over a decade and there are often delays in discharging older patients, leading to outliers on medical and surgical wards. This has an adverse effect on patient care and leads to increased length of stay and increased morbidity and mortality.

Withybush joined the Acute Frailty Network (AFN) in May 2018. It was the first hospital in Wales to do so. The team has pioneered an ambitious frailty improvement project that has been extended beyond the initial 12-month period.

Really caring about the patient journey from their arrival at the hospital to leaving is the most important thing you can do for them.

Lisa Marshall – Senior Sister Frailty Unit Ward 12 Withybush General Hospital

We recently introduced the RITA system onto our Ward and this has contributed significantly to the quality of care we are able to give our patients and helps us meet their needs which is not always easy. It is totally inclusive, as we have been able to offer the same stimulation to the patients that maybe isolated in a side ward and cannot come into the Day Room and also our End of Life patients. It has also supported the work of our Patient Experience Lead – Danielle who was brought on as a result of COVID-19 to help occupy our patients during lock down.

Danielle says “it helps stimulate and brighten the day for our patients. I cannot fault it, it’s a magical resource”.

Due to COVID-19 it is currently difficult, as we are not encouraging socialising. However, we have been able to put the RITA unit into the Bays where the patients have lots of fun watching the old movies.

Falls have been high in my patient group as well as anxiety. I have a ward of Acute Admission Frailty. Using RITA has allowed us to provide meaningful activities for patients. It gives them a choice of what they want to do as well as a very calming effect.

Providing this level of stimulation is important, it also means that there is meaningful and appropriate occupation that is stimulating for them and meets their needs. This therapy keeps them occupied during the day, the effect being they sleep better at night and we experience less falls. We have seen a reduction in our falls since using RITA. The calming music also helps too.

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The use of RITA has also helped our staff with patients in an invaluable way. It gives our Nurses more quality time with patients as it serves as a conduit to communication. It improves the level of interaction.

Sharing on the experiences of some of the scenarios on the Ward....

We had a lady who was End of Life. She was from a very theatrical background. She wasn't responsive, there was no communication. However, when we played the classical music for her from the RITA system, it helped her considerably. Whilst the outcome was the same. It significantly helped with relaxation and participation.

We had a gentleman that came from a Nursing Home, he was very aggressive and agitated at times. He was unable to express himself or his needs. We put the movies on for him and he absolutely loved them. His expressions were visible enjoyment and he became much calmer.

We had another gentleman who had Downs Syndrome & Dementia. He was also End of Life. He loved music. Again, the outcome was the same, but being able to improve the quality of his time was valuable and important.

In summary, RITA is a valuable resource on our Ward that not only provides quality, appropriate stimulation and support for our patients, but also positively supports us in our mission to provide professional first-class care for our patients on their journey with us.

Our Head of Nursing Carole Thomas was delighted to hear that we were taking our RITA story forward.

Lisa Marshall
Hywel Dda UHB – Senior Sister
Frailty Unit

