

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW UNIT

Objectives:

1. To critically appraise a systematic review and meta-analysis.
2. To address the question: what is the effect of bowel protocols to treat constipation on clinical outcomes among patients in high dependency units?

Assignment:

Read the clinical scenario below. Critically appraise the attached systematic review and meta-analysis by Oczkowski et al. What comments do you have for your colleagues interested in developing a bowel protocol for the coronary care unit (CCU)?

Clinical Scenario:

You have just taken over the CCU on Monday morning, and are rounding with the team. You are reviewing the history and course of a frail 83 year old male who has been in the CCU for 6 days with symptomatic uncontrolled atrial fibrillation, noting that he is now in sinus rhythm with a rate of 70-80 beats per minute. However, the bedside nurse indicates that he hasn't had a bowel movement since hospital admission, and this morning he is feeling bloated. She adds that she mentioned the constipation to the rounding team yesterday who encouraged him to ambulate with help as needed around the ward.

On examination, the patient has a slightly distended abdomen and bowel sounds are present but he is not tender. The pharmacist notes that he is not receiving any medications that can induce constipation. The dietician wonders if he is a bit dehydrated as he's not been drinking well and his dose of furosemide was doubled over the weekend. The senior resident visiting from out-of-province asks, 'does this unit have a bowel protocol?' The bedside nurse chimes in that the practice really wants to work on a bowel protocol because they see the need for such a tool, to be proactive rather than waiting until patients are uncomfortable with constipation.

You charge the resident with a quick literature search after rounds to see if there is a systematic review summarizing and appraising the randomized trials evaluating bowel protocols in anticipation of the 4pm inter-professional teaching session.

Enclosed Materials:

1. Citation: Oczkowski SJW, Duan EH, Groen A, Warren D, Cook DJ. The use of bowel protocols in critically ill adult patients: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Crit Care Med 2017 Mar 27. doi: 10.1097/CCM.0000000000002315. [Epub ahead of print].
2. Systematic Review Worksheet.