Weighing the Significance of Urinary Catheter Reduction
2013 Goldberg Award

Description of Process
Accurate intake and output measurement (I&O) is essential for caring for the acutely ill. Urinary catheters predispose patients to catheter associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI). Accurate I&O in milliliters, rather than merely documentation of number of incontinent episodes, improves medical decision making and patient outcomes. We were able to greatly reduce our catheter usage by weighing pads of incontinent patients to obtain accurate I&O. one gram = one milliliter = one cubic centimeter.

Equipment needed:
Scale, basket, absorbent pads, instruction card and staff education.

Uniqueness
Weighing of diapers is common in neonatal and pediatric care settings. No CAUTI prevention guideline written in the past 30 years has suggested using and weighing absorbent pads to provide accurate I&O.

Financial Impact
We were already using highly absorbent pads and incontinence barrier cream cloths to reduce HAPU rates. Pad usage actually went down due to educational efforts. Cost of scale, container and instruction card = $90. Each CAUTI is estimated to cost $2000. In preventing 2 CAUTIs, we have covered the cost of outfitting each room with a scale. Future CAUTIs prevented represent real cost savings to the institution.
References


Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Improvement map. Available at: http://www.ihi.org/IHI/Programs/ImprovementMap/.


