

Dignity Boxes S. Lyons, J. Zilka, H. Murdoch

What we know

- Older adults represent a large & increasing proportion of surgical patients.
- Little is known about effectively safeguarding the aging brain from peri-operative stress.
- Incidence of postoperative delirium is 20-45% among older adult surgery patients.
- Patients at high risk of post-operative delirium are likely to benefit from early re-orientation after surgery.

Following on from the successful implementation of the “Orientate Bundle” in our Trust, we have introduced Dignity Boxes...

*We encourage patients to bring their **spectacles, hearing aids and dentures** to theatre. The Dignity Box is simply a **plastic, reusable box** in which theatre staff **store a patient’s belongings** and ID sticker prior to induction of anaesthesia. The box **travels with the patient to recovery** where staff **return their belongings promptly**, enabling them to be **orientated with their surroundings, hear those around them and effectively communicate.***

Pilot

- Plan relayed and cascaded through theatre and recovery teams.
- Target patients: frail, trauma and laparotomy patients.
- Dignity Box recipient’s details collected for review.
- Recovery staff questionnaire.

Moving Forward

- We now have 50 boxes in circulation, available to all patients.
- Theatre documentation records use of Dignity Box and contents.

Pilot Results and Observations

- Over 3 months, 178 patient labels from Dignity Boxes collected.
- 30 patients randomly selected. 23 sets of notes successfully recalled. Notes review:

Average age (years)	75.3
Average duration of surgery (hours)	1.8
Average duration in recovery (hours)	2.6
Patients who wear spectacles (%)	83
Patients who wear hearing aids (%)	22
Patients who wear dentures (%)	39

Summary of Recovery Staff Questionnaire

	YES (%)	NO (%)
Is it easier to find the patient’s personal belongings?	97	3
Does it prompt you to return the patient’s glasses, hearing aids and teeth earlier?	100	0
Do you think patients find it reassuring having their belongings returned early?	100	0
Are patients easier to care for if they have their glasses, hearing aids and dentures in recovery?	100	0
Would you like all patients to have a dignity box?	89	11

- Presence of Dignity Box prompted improved documentation of patient belongings in the theatre complex.
- Potential to reduce the loss of possessions in theatres, which can be both distressing for the patient and costly for the Trust.
- Boxes not retained in theatres and lost to the wards.
- DSU staff requesting use of boxes for all patients

- Further staff education, awareness & labelling to avoid box losses.

