BREAKING NO BACKS:
Reducing Caregiver Injury Risks

As America's patient populations are aging and becoming more obese, the occupational risks for caregivers are greater than ever.

42.4% percentage of US adults who are obese[1]

1/4 number of US adults with a disability[2]

5X how much greater the risk of musculoskeletal disorders is for nursing assistants than other workers[3]

39% percentage of total injuries and illnesses in the healthcare industry that were musculoskeletal disorders in 2014[3]

Poor patient handling practices put strain on caregivers and also put patient safety at risk.

77% of practice administrators indicated their employees were trained to lift a patient.[3]

44% of administrators acknowledged that parts of an exam were skipped when a barrier was encountered.[3]

4.8% of practices offer a mechanical lift to transfer patients.[3]

Patients without a thorough exam may be susceptible to:

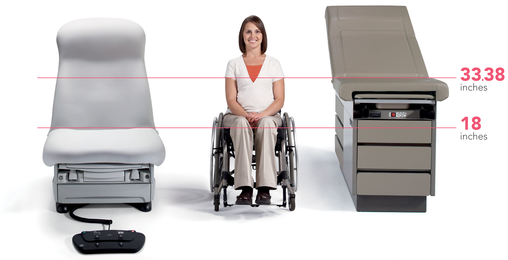
- Poorer quality of care
- Greater risk of misdiagnoses
- Missed benefits of early detection

How can we help caregivers and patients safely get the most from their point of care interactions?

A peer-reviewed study by Guy Fragala PhD, PE, CSP, CSPHP, sponsored by Midmark, evaluated perceived exertion by caregivers. Experienced caregivers performed two tasks: assisting a 235-pound patient with limited mobility onto a traditional fixed-height exam table and then onto a height-adjustable exam chair.

Height-adjustable exam chair

Traditional fixed-height exam table (similar to those found in many clinics)



Two tasks evaluated:	**235 pounds:**
1. assist patient onto a fixed-height table 2. assist patient onto a height-adjustable chair	lift-weight of a patient volunteer with limited mobility

Caregivers rated their exertion levels after both activities.

USING HEIGHT-ADJUSTABLE EXAM CHAIRS, CAREGIVERS REPORTED:

19X **less exertion** on shoulders

40X **less exertion** on upper back

29X **less exertion** on lower back

96.75% average reduction in perceived physical exertion using a height-adjustable exam chair[3]

1 out of 4 patient lifts using a fixed-height table were deemed unsafe[3]

"The exam table is the central and most important furnishing in the ambulatory care clinic. This research demonstrates that using height-adjustable, accessible exam chairs can improve the environment of care by significantly reducing occupational risk to caregivers while improving quality of care for patients."

Guy Fragala, PhD, PE, CSP, CSPHP

For more information, read the study online.

Sources:

[1] Obesity statistic: https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html

[2] Disability statistic: https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html

[3] Reducing Risk: Fragala G. Reducing Occupational Risk to Ambulatory Caregivers. Workplace Health Saf. 2016 Sep;64(9):414-9. doi: 10.1177/2165079916642776. Epub 2016 May 12. PMID: 27174130

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