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Understanding the Silent Struggles of Bedridden Patients

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It may seem simple to those who have never experienced being confined to bed for long periods of time, but for bedridden patients, every day is a difficult one, a challenge not only to their physical well-being, but also to their emotional and mental well-being. These patients may not talk or complain much, as they do not want to feel like a burden, but every day they go through a silent struggle that greatly affects their well-being. Understanding what they are going through is a big step, as it can help caregivers, families, and nurses provide better and more compassionate care.

Physically speaking, bedridden patients are not easy to deal with, facing body aches, weakness, and the risk of many health problems. Because they are unable to move their bodies much, they can develop bedsores, also called pressure ulcers. These are painful sores caused by lying in the same position for too long. National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel (NPIAP, 2020), stated that regular exercise and good skin and body care can help prevent this, but not all patients receive this type of attention or care.

Emotionally, most patients feel very lonely and forgotten. They can watch the world go by without them. Their friends stop visiting, and sometimes even family members become distant and forget about them. This deep loneliness can lead to depression. A study by Li et al. (2016) found that long-term bedridden patients have higher rates of depression and anxiety, especially when they feel that their independence has been lost and they begin to compare themselves to when they were bedridden and when they were not.

Loss of Dignity. When a person has to rely on others to eat, bathe, or use the toilet, they may feel ashamed or useless. Many bedridden patients choose to remain silent about their feelings because they do not want to be a burden. This silence is one of the things that further fuels their emotional pain. As Cutillas AL, Balili EE, Rellin EC, et al., (2025) noted, respecting a patient's dignity, especially in these types of illnesses, through gentle care and good communication is key to reducing emotional suffering.

Additionally, cognitive difficulties are prevalent, particularly in elderly people. Some may develop delirium or memory problems due to lack of activities and stimulation. Nurses may be very helpful by talking to patients in a calm and reasonable way, offering easy activities, or even just opening windows to let in natural light and air. According to Cuilan JT., Chavez JV., Soliva KJG., et.al. (2024), human interaction and mental stimulation are essential for preventing cognitive decline in bedridden patients.

In addition, another struggle is the fear of being a burden. Many patients feel guilty because someone else will take care of them. This guilt can prevent them from asking for help, even when they are feeling very sick. Nurse reminds them that their lives still have meaning. According to Chavez JV., W. Gregorio AM, Araneta AL, et al. (2024) A patient can feel appreciated, safe, and not like a burden if you are kind and attentive.

Bedridden patients face many struggles that are not always visible to anyone, not even the caregivers or the nurse. Pain, loneliness, loss of dignity, and emotional

suffering are part of their daily lives. They choose to isolate themselves because they do not want to add to the burden of others, but with gentle care, respect, and emotional support, these silent struggles can be alleviated. It only takes a little understanding and broad thinking to make a big difference in their lives, to make them feel like there is someone else who understands them.

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