

High frequency of potential entrapment gaps in hospital beds

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A survey of beds within a large teaching hospital in Ireland has shown that many of them did not comply with dimensional standards put in place to minimise the risk of entrapment. The report, published online in the journal *Age and Ageing*, therefore emphasises the need for careful selection of patients for whom bedrails are to be used, as well as the need for monitoring and maintenance of hospital bed systems.

Bedrails are commonly used as [safety devices](#) to prevent people falling from bed. However, although the risk for any individual is extremely low, people can and have become trapped or even strangled in almost all of the spaces that can exist between bedrails or between mattresses, rails, and head- or foot-boards.

The four zones within the bed system which account for 80% of reported entrapment incidents and for which the FDA provide dimensional guidance were assessed. Zone 1 is any open space between the perimeters of the rail; zone 2 is the space under the rail or between the rail supports; zone 3 is the space between the inside surface of the bedrail and the mattress and zone 4 is a gap between the mattress and rail at the end of the rail. Zones 1–3 pose a risk of head entrapment, and gaps should be

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