AIM: This Essentials of Care (EOC) initiative aimed to engage all stakeholders in developing a uniform approach to continence assessment, correctly identifying continence issues, and implementing appropriate strategies to improve patients’ continence, skin integrity and independence.

METHOD: Through the EOC model, a Urinary Continence Assessment Tool (UCAT) and a Continence Assessment Management Plan (CAMP) were developed and implemented. Praxis sessions were conducted to provide structure for the initiative. All patients admitted to Mary Giles Ward (MGW) were assessed using the UCAT, incorporating a three-day bladder chart to establish continence status. Utilising a draft CAMP, strategies were identified and individualised continence plans were implemented. Weekly Claims, Concerns and Issues sessions were held to address emerging issues, and the UCAT and CAMP were progressively modified. Staff development and patient education were concurrent foci of this initiative. Collaboration between key stakeholders resulted in the provision of appropriate, specific education to nursing staff and patients, and the development of a patient information sheet.

Review of policies and procedures
- Literature review
- Critique of continence assessment tools currently in use
- Review of continence websites
- Education sessions for staff

Creation of UCAT and CAMP
- Continence issues included in handover
- Four versions of the CAMP trialled
- Continuous evaluation and action planning for improvement and compliance using Claims, Concerns and Issues

OUTCOME
Education resulted in the development of nursing skill, knowledge and confidence in assessing and managing urinary incontinence

EMERGING PRACTICE
- PATHWAY
  - ADMITTED TO THE REHABILITATION UNIT
  - QUESTIONED ABOUT INCONTINENCE USING UCAT
  - THREE-DAY MONITORING USING BLADDER CHART
  - CONTINENCE ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (CAMP)

INABILITY TO MANAGE ONE’S OWN INCONTINENCE HAS A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON QUALITY OF LIFE (MALABREY 2009)