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Pressure Ulcers

Impact on Health & Wellbeing



Definition

A pressure ulcer is an area of localised damage to the skin and underlying tissue caused by pressure, shear, friction or a combination of these.

They are most likely to occur when a hard bony area covered by a thin layer of tissue is in contact with a hard surface, such as a bed, trolley, theatre table, wheelchair etc.

Damage occurs when pressure areas are not regularly relieved and are more prevalent in the frail elderly.



Facts

During 2013/14

45% of all pressure ulcers identified by Croydon Health Services occurred in the patient's own home

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Impact on Health and Wellbeing

- Isolation and depression
- Debilitating pain
- Reduced mobility
- Increased risk of infection

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Snapshot of vignettes

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Grade 2 Pressure Ulcer



Mrs B is an 82 year old lady who lives in her own home. Her ability to remain independent at home has been compromised by reduced immobility and left sided weakness resulting from a previous stroke.

Frequent urinary urgency often results in incontinence.

These external conditions resulted in the development of a sacral pressure ulcer, sacral moisture lesions and reduced healing capacity generally.

Mrs B often experiences a radiating burning pain, she feels depressed, isolated and lonely due to these conditions.



Grade 2

Partial thickness skin loss

Involving the epidermis, dermis or both

The ulcer is superficial and presents as an abrasion or blister



Grade 4 Pressure Ulcer



Mr C was admitted to an acute elderly care ward.

On initial assessment his wound appeared sloughy with a large central necrotic region and associated severe maceration (wasting away) around the wound margin radiating across both buttocks.

The wound was found to be 8cm long, 10cm wide and 5cm deep.

The wound gave off a strong offensive smell and was found to be infected with staphylococcus aureus.

Mr C's pain score regularly fluctuates between 8 -10 out of a total score of 10 on his pain chart. He is embarrassed as he is aware that his wound smells, he has lost his appetite and is distressed.



Notable Facts

- Stage 1 pressure ulcers can be reversed in 3 days if all pressure is taken off the site.
- Stage 4 pressure ulcers can take between 3 months – 2 years to heal.



Complications

- Infections can spread to the blood, heart and bone
- Amputations
- Patients are at higher risks of urinary tract and respiratory infections
- Treatment can be costly including loss of earning



Prevention

The majority of pressure ulcers are preventable by:

- Relieving pressure through movement
- Eating healthily
- Drinking plenty of water
- Regular checking of skin, a minimum of twice daily
- Acting on changes to skin e.g. redness, darkening, blister or bruising

