Press Release: The Pressure is on to Relieve Pressure Ulcers
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Problem: Pressure ulcers have been linked to mummies in Ancient Egypt and documented since the early 1800. 2.5 million patients are treated each year for pressure ulcers. 60,000 die from complications resulting in an estimated cost of $11 billion.

Evidence: Evidence-based practice supports preventive measures such as repositioning, proper surface selection, incontinence management and adequate nutrition.

Strategy: An innovative plan beyond evidence-based practice was developed to prevent pressure ulcers. A multidisciplinary team consisting of staff nurses, a Wound, Ostomy, Continence Nurse, Nutritionist, Occupational Therapist, and physician was formed. A daily report of at-risk and actual patients with pressure ulcers was gathered. The team reviewed the data and determined that identification of pressure ulcers was inaccurate. Education regarding pressure ulcer identification was provided to staff via computer-based learning and hands-on workshops.

Practice Change: Skin care teams were formed on each nursing unit. The unit teams performed weekly skin care checks. The audit tool included an algorithm of pressure ulcer staging to assure accuracy of documentation. The teams educated the bedside nurses regarding pressure ulcer prevention and treatment. Daily reports were given to the charge nurses with a list of patients with a documented pressure ulcer.

Evaluation: Baseline data were collected to determine effectiveness of process. Monthly audits and meetings were held to identify opportunities for improvement.

Results: Since inception of the skin care team program, data indicate a decrease in hospital-acquired pressure ulcers from 3.47% to 0.41%.

Recommendations: A daily list of patients with pressure ulcers has increased awareness of prevention of the problem. Live data and education are superior to retrospective data. Collaboration between departments and weekly skin care checks resulted in improved prevention, identification and interventions.

Lessons Learned: Managerial support and education are key to success. Implementation of a hospital wide team is challenging but can greatly increase the chance for success and improved patient outcomes.

Bibliography:

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