

Increasing Pressure Injury Awareness in the Emergency Department

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Author Note

“On my honor I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance with
this written assignment.”

Abstract

Internationally people are suffering physically, emotionally, and psychologically as well as dying untimely deaths because of hospital acquired pressure injuries (HAPIs). Despite the years of evidence based clinical guidelines; billions of dollars are on treatment, prevention, and utilization of services because of the inability of the healthcare team to eliminate the problem of HAPI.

A search of the evidence leads one to look beyond guidelines and practice to the problem of overcrowded emergency departments (EDs). The overcrowding creates a backlog of sick immobile patients lying in an ED on a slim flat stretcher for hours causing tissue and muscle damage creating the foundation for a pressure injury (PI). The evidence suggests that preventative measures need to begin in the ED and the knowledge deficit that exists amongst the ED team addressed to create sustainable decrease in HAPI.

This manuscript describes a pre- post intervention quality improvement project which includes combining PI education along with the implementation of action in the form of a pressure injury prevention protocol in the ED in order to decrease overall pressure injury incidence in adult patient who are 80 and over admitted to a medical surgical unit. Clinicians are aware of the risk of patients admitted to an intensive care unit, but are remiss in patients admitted to a medical surgical unit. The key to eradication of PI in healthcare is early prevention, action, and intervention which must occur at the earliest and largest entry point to healthcare for a majority of Americans – the ED.

Keywords: Pressure injury, prevention, treatment, classification, assessment, emergency department