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Comprehensive pressure ulcer educational program: implementation and assessment of effectiveness

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A pressure ulcer is a common problem in all health care organizations because it has been associated with increased mortality rates particularly in elderly persons. The incidence of pressure ulcers differs greatly by clinical setting. However, the optimal incidence rate may vary depending on patient case mix, severity of illness, and other contextual factors. Pressure ulcers are now considered a good indicator of quality of care and its prevention falls within the domain of nursing practice. Failure to prevent or heal them might lead to litigation. As a result of a quality improvement survey which indicated both an increase in the number and prevalence of pressure ulcers in one of the Saudi Hospital, pressure ulcer prevention program is modified. The aim of the revised pressure ulcer prevention program is to provide hospital's staff with strategies for improving patients' outcomes by decreasing the prevalence of pressure ulcers, identifying areas for improvement in prevention of pressure ulcers, and increasing the staff compliance to the pressure ulcer guidelines in the hospital. The tracking mechanism of the pressure ulcer prevalence is instituted every six months post implementation of the educational program in order to assess the program effectiveness. The literature supports collecting prevalence and incidence data as best indicators of prevention program effectiveness. In conclusion, it expected that following program implementation, awareness of the results and impact of prevention measures will increase; most nursing units will experience a decrease in the incidence of pressure ulcers and improve overall quality of care with a cost saving.

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