

**PRESSURE ULCER PREVALENCE AUDIT: WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF DOING IT?**

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**Aim:** To compare Pressure Ulcer Prevalence Audits within a District General Hospital, carried out 5 years apart, to determine whether the introduction of an innovative way of preventing and managing pressure ulcers had made any difference in the overall Prevalence of Ulcers within the Operational Division. The audits also determine whether there could be inappropriate use of equipment and where the “hot spots” of high incidence are.

**Methods:** Four main hospital sites were audited. The study was conducted by tissue viability link nurses, with all data collection forms analysed by Pegasus Ltd. The data was collected using a predetermined protocol, for all in patients at 00.00 hours on the date of the audit. Ulcers were graded using the EPUAP Pressure Ulcer Grading system. (EPUAP, 1999)

**Results:** A similar number of patients were seen, 566 in 2001, 591 in 2006. Overall prevalence was 17% in 2001, and 15% in 2006. The main difference was related to the type of pressure reducing surface used, with 37 static overlay mattresses seen in 2001, versus 90 in 2006. There was a reduction in the number of dynamic surfaces in use, 109 in 2001, and 63 in 2006.

**Conclusions:** Although a reduction in pressure ulcer prevalence of 2% cannot be seen as significant, it was encouraging that it was no higher. There has been a definite shift away from the use of dynamic systems, with no apparent detriment to patient care. Due to the increased availability of static overlays, patients are being upgraded more quickly. In the past, nursing staff may have waited several days to obtain “higher level” equipment, with pressure areas already deteriorating.