

IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST PRACTICE IN THE PREVENTION OF HEEL PRESSURE ULCERS IN THE ACUTE ORTHOPEDIC POPULATION

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Aim: To implement and evaluate a heel pressure ulcer prevention program (HPUPP) for orthopedic patients.

Design, Setting, Subjects: Program development of HPUPP involved input from administrators, staff and adult patients on an orthopedic service in an academic tertiary care facility, located in a small urban center in Canada. Prospective evaluation was conducted. **Methods:** Consensus exercises with clinical staff and administrators (Delphi and Nominal group) were used to, evaluate current practices, select a heel protective device, and develop key aspects of the HPUPP. HPUPP involved an individualized, bedside, staff education program, a team approach to improve patient mobility, and utilization of a heel protective device. A 2 inch foam wedge covered in washable vinyl was placed at the foot of all beds on the orthopedic service.

Results: After the program was implemented, the incidence of heel pressure ulcers was 0% which was a significant reduction compared to pre implementation levels (13.8% (95% Confidence Interval 8-18%)). Key components of the program success were initial and ongoing support from administration and surgeons, incorporation of feedback from clinical staff and patients, and keeping the program simple.

Conclusions: Heel PU can be prevented in most orthopedic patients using a universal heel PU prevention program.

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