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LOW FRICTION MATERIAL IN THE PREVENTION OF FRICTION TRAUMA IN BEDBOUND PATIENTS

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Limited mobility subjects patients to shear forces, causing pressure ulcers (PU). Reduction of shear reduces PU and cost. The product has a unique design, with virtually zero friction property.

Aim: to evaluate potential in prevention of shear in heel and sacral sites of bedbound patients. Skin assessment relies on subjective judgements. High frequency diagnostic ultrasound was used to provide objective data.

Method: Thirteen bedbound patients with 8 grade one heel and 5 grade one sacral PU were scanned using 20 MHz B-mode ultrasound. With heel PUs a boot was applied to one heel made from test material, the other continued standard care. All sacral damage used test material pants. Further ultrasound scan assessments were weeks 2 and 4. These scans were analysed to calculate relative distributions of low echogenic (an indicator of oedema) and high echogenic pixels.

Ultrasound initially demonstrated high oedema in all PUs. After 2 weeks test material use, the number of low echogenic pixels had decreased and pixel distribution moved towards a normal, indicating that levels of oedema were falling. In heels not covered by test material, pixel distribution patterns had not altered significantly from visit one. By week 4 oedema levels, in treated areas, had fallen to that of normal skin (demonstrated by relative distribution of low and high echogenic pixels), whereas untreated areas still had high levels of oedema.

Results / Conclusion: the test material stopped PU development in vulnerable areas and use over a 4 week period returned skin to a normal profile.