

P 39

IMPROVING OUTCOMES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF GRADE 3 AND 4 PRESSURE ULCERS

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Aim: Pressure ulcers are costly to manage, requiring high levels of nursing time, expensive pressure relieving/reducing equipment and a range of wound care products. The aim of this small pilot study was to observe whether by using Negative Pressure Wound Therapy (NPWT) rather than traditional dressings, the outcomes could be improved and the cost per patient could be reduced.

Method: Five patients who were referred to the Tissue Viability Service with Grade 3 and/or Grade 4 pressure ulcers (EPUAP grading) were treated with a NPWT device*. Data was collected on the cost and outcomes of treatment in comparison to standard practice (traditional wound care). This included wound progression, frequency of dressing changes (nursing time plus the cost of wound care products), cost of other equipment and incidence of complications.

All patients were treated in the community setting.

Result: The outcomes of the evaluation suggest that there was a reduction in the frequency of dressing changes, exudate was managed more effectively, and the wounds progressed when NPWT was implemented.

Conclusion: The outcomes of this small evaluation are positive and have implications for improving patient care and more effective use of resources in this patient group. There are plans to extend this study to a larger number of patients.

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