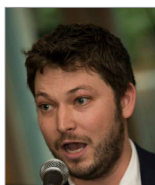


Feeling the pressure



Adam Bushby
Senior Editor,
Wounds International

It is all change here in Yorkshire as the heady days of summer, which broke records in the UK for sustained glorious temperatures, have been replaced by the more common sight of grey skies and cold temperatures as autumn sets out its stall. And in my continuing vein of tenuous links, it is all change in the NHS. Following discussions with a raft of stakeholders, NHS Improvement has recently published new guidance on the definition and measurement of pressure ulcers (PUs) (Fletcher and Hall, 2018).

The aim of the new guidance is to cut down on the amount of disparities in the reporting of PUs across England and it is part of the successful and ongoing Stop the Pressure programme. It will be rolled out in nationwide as of April 2019. The underlying reason that spurred NHS Improvement to undertake the process of issuing new guidance can be charted back to data from an audit and survey back in 2016, which showed that the systems currently used in England on local, regional and national levels to monitor the patient harm associated with PUs currently lack standardisation. The NHS Improvement-led Stop the Pressure programme was, therefore, initiated to combat this worrying trend, as well as the high levels of under reporting that was found.

Looking beyond UK shores, there are developments afoot internationally too. Due for publication next autumn, the National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (NPUAP), the European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (EPUAP) and Pan Pacific Pressure Injury Alliance (PPPIA) have been working on new PU guidelines, which will teach clinicians about pressure injuries/ulcers to be used all over the globe in hospitals and clinics.

The focused work undertaken by the NPUAP, EPUAP and PPPIA has most recently seen the launch of a new online Consumer Survey, which is designed to glean a true reflection of the patient voice. The results of this survey will inform the revision of the *Prevention and Treatment of Pressure Ulcers/Injuries: Clinical Practice Guidelines*. The survey is comprehensive and seeks to address the concerns of patients and families who have experience of living with PUs. It is available in a range of languages and can be found on the NPUAP website (NPUAP, 2018).

The previous guidelines issued by NPUAP, EPUAP

and PPPIA were launched in 2014 with the 986 invited stakeholder individuals and organisations consulted. The guideline development team used a consensus voting process to allocate strength of recommendations — 575 recommendations were made — which were used to inform clinicians on how confident they can be that a recommendation will ‘do more harm than good’.

This year’s Stop Pressure Ulcers day will take place on November 15 and EPUAP are making a concerted effort to see knowledge and understanding of PUs reach a wider audience. Publicity material will be made available free of charge on EPUAP’s website (EPUAP, 2018), including logos and flyers, while T-shirts and stickers can be purchased on the site.

Reducing and, ultimately, eliminating avoidable PUs is the responsibility of all clinicians, the world over. Although it may seem overwhelming, the NHS Midlands and East achieved a 50% reduction in PUs within a year of launching the Stop the Pressure campaign (NHS Improvement, 2017). Ambitious it may be, but with passion and support from front line staff, patients and other colleagues, it is eminently achievable. WINT

European Pressure Ulcer Pressure Day (2018) *Stop Pressure Ulcers*. EPUAP, Prague. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2NaTsAe> (accessed 14.09.2018)

Fletcher J, Hall J (2018) New guidance on how to define and measure pressure ulcers. *Nurs Times* 114: 10, 41–4

NHS Improvement (2017) *National Stop the Pressure programme: One year on – our focus for improvement*. NHS Improvement, Manchester. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2xc3MxJ> (accessed 14.09.2018)

NHS Improvement (2018) *Stop The Pressure*. NHS Improvement, Manchester. Available at: <https://bit.ly/1nrPW66> (accessed 14.09.2018)

NPUAP (2018) *New Consumer Survey to Inform the 2019 International Guideline*. NPUAP, Washington DC. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2x6FyVC> (accessed 13.09.2018)

NPUAP, EPUAP and PPPIA (2014) *Prevention and Treatment of Pressure Ulcers: Clinical Practice Guidelines*. NPUAP, Washington DC. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2xeUFLl> (accessed 14.09.2018)

Adam Bushby
Senior Editor, Wounds International

If you would like to contribute to a future issue of the journal, please contact Adam Bushby, Senior Editor, Wounds International, at: abushby@omniamed.com