

CLINICAL FOCUS

THERAPEUTIC SURFACES

PRESSURE ULCERS: HAVE WE OVER LOOKED VALUABLE DATA?

Clarke (2004). *International Wound Journal*; 1(2): 143.

Overview

A letter published in a recent journal highlights the cost incurred by the number of people admitted to hospital primarily due to pressure ulcers.

Where did this data come from?

Each year the UK Department of Health publishes hospital episode statistics, providing summary data on all patients admitted to English NHS hospitals.

Data provided:

- How many people were admitted to hospital for specific medical reasons
- How long they waited for admission
- How long their stay was

How does this help us?

It provides data on how many people were admitted to hospital with the primary cause of pressure ulcers.

Main Points

Statistics: 2002–2003:

- A total of 75,328 hospital bed days (0.14%) were occupied by patients admitted to hospital primarily due to pressure ulcers
- The mean stay of these patients was 38.3 days

Financial Impact:

- Average cost per bed day – £147.00
- Total cost per year – £11.07 Million

These figures ONLY relate to hotel care for patients admitted as a direct result of pressure ulcers

Further financial considerations:

- Costs associated with the actual treatment and management of the pressure ulcer
- What are the costs involved for the total number of patients in hospital with pressure ulcers including those that occur after admission?

Is the problem of pressure ulcers getting better?

- Simple answer is No
- Each year from 1998– 2002 the total number of hospital beds consumed by admission with pressure ulcers has increased

Why?

Considerable attention is now focused on pressure ulcers due to the development and dissemination of the national pressure ulcer prevention guidelines.

The rise in pressure ulcer admissions could also be attributed to a weakness in the prevention and management of pressure ulcers in the nonhospital environment. OR

Is it due to a growing awareness of the need to manage these wounds

What does this data do for us?

- Offers an insight into the national picture for pressure ulcers
- Admissions primarily due to pressure ulcers are Relatively Common And Hospital Stays Are Lengthy

Summary

- The number of pressure ulcers and cost involved are increasing annually
- Should the solution be sought in the non-hospital environment?