

PRESSURE ULCER CARE IN CRITICALLY ILL PATIENTS

De Laat Erik¹

¹*Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at The Radboud University medical center (Radboud, The Netherlands).*

Introduction: The aim of this presentation on pressure ulcer care in adult critically ill patients is to overview the current scientific evidence on pressure ulcers and pressure ulcer care in patients admitted to Intensive Care Units (ICUs) with a view to epidemiology, risk factors, risk assessment and prevention.

Methods: Building on results of previous research^[1] we searched from 2005 to present the library databases Medline, CINAHL, EMBASE, Web of Science and The Cochrane library. Subject headings included 'decubitus ulcer' or 'pressure ulcer' combined with 'critical ill (ness)', 'critically ill patients', 'critical care (nursing)' with all topical subheadings.

Results: In the past 10 years, about 80 studies are published and selected for further analysis. The incidence and prevalence of pressure ulcers is still sizable. Many risk factors are independently associated with pressure ulcer occurrence. Although several studies confirm these predefined risk factors, other studies refute these risk factors. There is no evidence for a valid and reliable risk assessment tool.

In the absence of proven effective preventive interventions in critically ill patients, routine turning on a pressure-reducing mattress remains the generally accepted standard for the prevention of pressure ulcers. However, the compliance in daily practice with this standard is problematic.

Conclusion: During 24th Conference of the European Wound Management Association the implications of the analysis will be discussed.

1. De Laat, E.H.E.W., et al., Epidemiology, risk and prevention of pressure ulcers in critically ill patients: a literature review. *Journal of Wound Care*, 2006. 15(6): p. 269-75