A NEW THEORETICAL MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESSURE ULCERS AND OTHER DEPENDENCE-RELATED LESIONS

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Objective: To review the risk factors included in pressure ulcer risk assessment scales and construct a theoretical model for identifying the etiological factors of skin ulcers, excluding those of systemic origin (e.g., venous, arterial, and neuropathic)

Methods: Consensus study with expert panel (Delphi Method) based on a structured review of the literature. A search was conducted of the main databases between 1962 and 2009 with no language limitations. All descriptive and/or validation studies were included, but the grey literature was excluded. After identifying the risk factors in each scale, they were grouped in risk dimensions as a basis for constructing a new theoretical model.

Results: Eighty-three risk factors were identified in the 56 scales reviewed and classified by the expert panel into 23 risk dimensions. These dimensions were used to construct a new theoretical model (middle-range theory) for chronic wound development that explains the production mechanism of seven types of lesion: moisture, pressure, friction, combined pressure-moisture, combined pressure-friction, multifactorial lesions, and coadjuvant factors. These lesions were generically defined as dependence-related injuries.

Conclusions: Based on the classification of risk factors from the different scales into risk dimensions, a new middle-range theory was constructed that explains the production mechanism of 7 dependence-related lesions considered to date as pressure ulcers.

Clinical relevance: The prevention and treatment of these lesions requires a correct diagnosis and differentiation of their cause and management of the risk dimensions involved. The type of lesion also influences the selection of local approach.