

OR Today

Life in *and* out of the OR

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cover photo by Robert Dybec

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PREVENTING PRESSURE ULCERS: IS YOUR O.R. READY?

BY ROBERT B. DYBEC RN, MS, CPSN, CNOR

NEWSFLASH: “The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that beginning October 2008 they will no longer reimburse hospitals for the treatment of new pressure sores in Medicare patients”

This news announced last year has had hospitals across the United States scrambling to look at what initiatives they currently have in place to identify, prevent and treat pressure ulcers. The potential financial impact on hospitals could be significant as the treatment of pressure ulcers can be extremely expensive.

Pressure ulcers occur in approximately 15% of general acute care patients and are caused by pressure, shear force and friction or some combination thereof, but moisture, oxygen deprivation, elevated temperatures and sensory impairment are also important factors.

As hospitals look at their statistics on Hospital Acquired Pressure Ulcers (HAPUs) a new focus is turning towards the surgical patient population and the realization that a certain percentage of these patients may have O.R. Acquired Pressure Ulcers (ORAPUs).

ORAPUs are the result of what perioperative staff is doing or in some cases not doing to properly position and pad patients undergoing a surgical procedure.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- AORN released the revised Recommended Practices for Positioning the Patient in the Perioperative Setting in January of this year. This new document is incredibly detailed and is an excellent resource for perioperative nurses regard-

ing the positioning and padding of patients having surgery.

- The two most common factors related to the potential for injury in the operating room have been identified as
 1. The age of the patient.
 2. The length of time on the operating room table.
- Research and studies have shown that the standard foam O.R. table mattress does nothing to relieve or reduce pressure. One study actually showed an increase in the risk of injury to patients when using only these foam mattresses. It is recommended that O.R. table mattresses be upgraded or a viscoelastic polymer overlay be used to reduce the risk of injury to patients. This is especially true if your mattresses are old and worn.
- The padding and positioning devices we use in the O.R. should provide pressure relief, reduction and redistribution. According to AORN these devices need to maintain a normal capillary interface pressure of 32mm Hg or less. The products you use should be clinically proven to be effective and supported by documentation and research from the manufacturer.

Be wary of pressure mapping studies which are not standardized, regulated and are rarely repeatable. Many companies will make claims about their products based on these in-house studies.

- Pre-operative assessment is crucial in determining the pre-existence of possible Stage I and suspected Deep Tissue Injuries (DTIs) in patients having surgery. Even though all patients are assessed upon admission to the hospital, some O.R.s have taken it a step further and are assessing all pa-

tients pre-operatively using the Braden Scale. Perioperative nurses are encouraged to learn more about pressure ulcers and their staging. The National Pressure Ulcer advisory Panel (NPUAP) has an excellent website (www.npuap.org) where nurses can see and learn about identifying, preventing and treating pressure ulcers. The Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society is another great resource for nurses looking to obtain more information about pressure ulcers (www.wocn.org).

- AORN recommends that yearly in-services include an update or refresher on patient positioning. Perioperative nurses should get back to basics when considering positioning and padding. Look at obvious pressure points and the need for additional padding. Intra-operative positioning, patient safety and familiarity with the devices used for positioning are important.

Post-operative assessment and communication with all members of the team is vital as is accurate documentation regarding everyone involved with the positioning, which devices were used, what position the patient was in and anywhere that special attention was given or there was a concern.

As hospitals come to grips with these new regulations it is important for perioperative nurses to become proactive with O.R. initiatives to reduce the risk of ORAPUs and provide a safer environment for surgical patients with improved post-operative outcomes.

For more information on Action Products please visit www.actionproducts.com or call 800.228.7763.

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Resources:

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Systems and Fiscal Year 2009. Published April 30, 2008. Available at: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/AcuteInpatientPPS/IPPS/itemdetail.asp?filterType=none&filterByDID=0&sortByDID=4&sortOrder=descending&itemID=CMS1209719&>.

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AORN Standards and Recommended Practices for Positioning of the Patient in the Perioperative Setting, Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses, Denver, CO, 2008.

How are Action® products unique in today's crowded marketplace?

Value and evidence-based clinical proof of performance. Action® pads and positioners revolutionized the surgical environment by providing an entirely new level of pressure ulcer protection for both the patient and the hospital. We created this market and as the pioneers, are also the worldwide leader in independent clinical proof of performance. Many studies currently cited by AORN's new 2008 Recommended Practices were based on Action® products. The value we bring to our customers is also unmatched: price, quality, performance and range. Our ROI program proves the value of our product to any hospital. Because Medicare and the industry is demanding more from positioners and pads in use within the hospital environment, hospitals are going to have to take a harder, closer and more clinical look at what their staff members are using to ensure patient safety. This is where we can really help. We are dedicated to providing Body Smart® solutions for hospitals as they navigate current and future pressure prevention challenges.

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Medicare changes and industry standards demand that your surgical team proactively seek solutions to pressure injury challenges within the OR. Meet these challenges and ensure patient safety with cost-effective, reusable Action® pads and positioners. Our Body Smart® solutions help you relax knowing your team can:

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- ✓ Use clinically proven products
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- ✓ Choose from multiple designs and sizes
- ✓ Reduce amount of disposable waste
- ✓ Take our free online positioning CE course

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