New Recommendations Guide Choice of Hospital Bed Surface to Prevent, Treat Pressure Ulcers

Consensus Algorithm Takes Guesswork Out of Surface Selection

CHICAGO, April 8, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- For the first time, nurses and physicians now have a validated algorithm that takes the guesswork out of choosing a bed surface to help treat and prevent pressure ulcers. The new Evidence-and Consensus-Based Support Surface Algorithm, which was published in the Journal of Wound Ostomy Continence Nursing, provides essential support to improve pressure ulcer prevention and treatment. The benchmark work was supported by an educational grant from Hill-Rom (NYSE: HRC).

"Clinicians know and guidelines emphasize the importance of surface selection to protect patients from pressure ulcers," said lead author and WOC nurse Laurie McNichol, Cone Health, Wesley Long Hospital, Greensboro, NC. "Yet a comprehensive review of the available research was lacking. Clinicians needed a validated approach to maximizing the potential benefits of choosing a surface to treat and protect our patients."

The Evidence-and Consensus-Based Support Surface Algorithm distills more than 20 years of published research into an easy-to-navigate visual decision tree that clinicians can easily use to guide bed surface selection in the hospital. The algorithm and supporting statements were developed by a consensus team of 20 clinical experts led by the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society (WOCN®).

Millions of Patients at Risk, Evidence-Based Guidance Lacking

Pressure ulcers are a serious and common complication, particularly for patients facing long-term hospitalization. In the U.S. alone, 2.5 million patients will develop pressure ulcers each year, at a cost of $9 to $11 billion.¹

Major guidelines presented in 2014 emphasize steps to help stem the tide of these preventable injuries, including the use of specialized support surfaces on patient beds. Support surfaces include a variety of overlays, mattresses and specialized bed systems designed to help heal and protect skin. However, these guidelines lacked evidenced-based recommendations for clinicians on how to choose surfaces based on patient needs.

"We all saw a clear need for this tool," said McNichol. "This algorithm will contribute to patient outcomes in hospitals around the country."

Additional publications are planned for later in the spring to further guide the practical implementation of the algorithm.

"We are proud to know that our support of WOCN® made this important work possible," said Melissa Fitzpatrick, RN, MSN, FAAN, Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer at Hill-Rom. "Evidence-based guidance is essential for clinical decision-making and this new algorithm puts that guidance within easy reach for nurses and physicians."

Hill-Rom Safe Skin® Program to Embrace New Algorithm

Hill-Rom has long focused on pressure ulcer prevention through its Safe Skin® Program, which is designed to assist facilities in reducing pressure ulcer prevalence. The Hill-Rom program will now include recommendations from the WOCN® algorithm, helping hospitals apply the best understanding on how to use their surfaces to care for patients.

"This new surface selection algorithm allows Hill-Rom to really help nurses get patients throughout their facilities onto the right surface at the right time," says Deborah Davis, Hill-Rom Executive Director of Clinical Research and Marketing. "Its customizable approach ensures facility-specific practices are in place, but leverages the expert consensus statement as its framework."

For more information on the new WOCN® consensus article, surface selection algorithm or Hill-Rom's Safe Skin® Program, please visit the Hill-Rom Clinical Resource Center (https://library.hill-rom.com).

About Hill-Rom
Hill-Rom is a leading global medical technology company with more than 7,000 employees worldwide. We partner with health care providers in more than 100 countries by focusing on patient care solutions that improve clinical and economic outcomes in five core areas: Advancing Mobility, Wound Care and Prevention, Clinical Workflow, Surgical Safety and Efficiency, and Respiratory Health. Hill-Rom's people, products, and programs work towards one mission: Every day, around the world, we enhance outcomes for patients and their caregivers.

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1 Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Preventing Pressure Ulcers in Hospitals: A Toolkit for Improving Quality of Care.


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