A Five-Year Retrospective Study of Descriptors Associated With Identification of Stage I and Suspected Deep Tissue Pressure Ulcers in Persons With Darkly Pigmented Skin

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Abstract

Background:
Skin color is critical to pressure ulcer prevention. Therefore, it is essential that practitioners performing wound assessments understand that color differences are present in the normal skin and the presence of darkly pigmented skin may lead to inaccuracies in staging and the incidence of pressure ulcers. This study aimed to evaluate the adequacy of the NPUAP pressure ulcer staging guidelines (NPUAP 2016) with regard to dark pigmented skin.

Purpose:
To determine whether the NPUAP definitions adequately reflect the varying skin tones associated with darkly pigmented skin and to identify common descriptors associated with stage I and suspected deep tissue injury (sDTI) pressure ulcers in persons with darkly pigmented skin.

Setting and Design:
A retrospective review of 927 WOCN notes, compiled by 9 WOCNs, was performed. The study population comprised 544 darkly pigmented skin patients. A Five-Year Retrospective Study of Descriptors Associated With Identification of Stage I and Suspected Deep Tissue Pressure Ulcers in Persons With Darkly Pigmented Skin

Results:
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Conclusion:
NPUAP pressure ulcer staging guidelines are not adequately representative of darkly pigmented skin. The impact of skin color should be considered in pressure ulcer staging and prevention. Future research is needed to better understand stage I and sDTI definitions and accurately identify stage I and sDTI pressure ulcers in persons with darkly pigmented skin.

Discussion:
These study findings suggest that the NPUAP pressure ulcer staging guidelines do not adequately reflect the presence of darkly pigmented skin. Practitioners need to have adequate training for accurate staging and prevention. Understanding the impact of skin color on the staging process is critical to accurately assess the clinical presence of stage I and sDTI pressure ulcers.

References:
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