



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel
Washington, DC

NOT ALL PRESSURE ULCERS ARE AVOIDABLE

The National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel's recent consensus conference panelists agreed that patients who choose not to participate in their own pressure ulcer prevention could develop unavoidable pressure ulcers. They also agreed that there are clinical situations in which the development of pressure ulcers can be unavoidable. The conference was held at Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland.

Twenty-four multidisciplinary experts in pressure ulcer prevention and treatment comprised the voting panelists. Specialties included medicine, geriatrics, surgery, specialty nursing, physical therapy and dieticians. The international panel represented professional wound organizations, accrediting bodies, hospitals, rehabilitation agencies, long-term care, hospice, and home care.

The panelists agreed that the current definition of unavoidable pressure ulcers developed by the Federal Government for long term care settings captured the spirit of pressure ulcer avoidability but could not be used in all settings. A revised definition was developed and agreed upon by the panelists

Unavoidable - means that the individual developed a pressure ulcer even though the provider had evaluated the individual's clinical condition and pressure ulcer risk factors; defined and implemented interventions that are consistent with individual needs goals and recognized standards of practice; monitored and evaluated the impact of the interventions; and revised the approaches as appropriate.

The panelists unanimously agreed there are patient situations that create unavoidable pressure ulcers. A condition seen in patients in critical care, hemodynamic instability may preclude turning or repositioning and lead to unavoidable pressure ulcers. Patients who refuse to be repositioned may also develop unavoidable pressure ulcers. The panelists agreed that the condition of skin failure exists.

The full report of the consensus conference including a report on the methodology used will be forthcoming.

The National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel serves as the authoritative voice for improved patient outcomes in pressure ulcer prevention and treatment through public policy, education and research.

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