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Prevalence of Chronic Wounds in Canada

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We gathered data that was collected at health care facilities across Canada, we reviewed the methodological rigor with which the data was collected by each institution and accepted only data from studies where the presence or absence of the skin ulcer was determined by direct clinical observation of the skin by a trained observer.

In total we combined data that surveyed over 14,000 patients from 45 health care institutions in locations from all across Canada. A summary of the results is listed below

PRESSURE ULCERS

The prevalence of pressure ulcers in individuals within the following health care settings across Canada was found to be the following

24-26% in Acute Care hospitals

28-31% in Non Acute Care Facilities (Long Term Care, Nursing homes, etc...)

21-23% in Mixed Health Care Facilities (Acute and Non Acute care)

13-17% in Community Care

Comparisons over time can be made from epidemiological studies that were conducted using the identical collection method and from that we can say that the prevalence of pressure ulcers in persons within acute care facilities between 1999 and 2003, has changed very little.

Campbell, Woodbury, Keast, Trenholme, Houghton. A study performed in the late 1990s that estimated the costs of treating individuals with pressure ulcers within a long term care facility and found that it was on average \$24,050 for 3 months treatment. In a recent case study (Allen & Houghton, 2004) published in May issue of Wound Care Canada the cost of 3 months care in the community is a similarly alarming cost figure of \$27,500 for 3 months of care.

OTHER TYPES OF ULCERS

We have less information about the prevalence of other types of chronic wounds in Canada.

Since Pressure ulcers that occur from sitting or lying in one place for too long, are only one type of ulcer, the total number of people with a chronic

wound of any type is anticipated to be much higher.

For example we know from two studies performed in Ontario and Manitoba that the prevalence of all types of chronic wounds is between 34-37% of persons receiving community care

One very well conducted study that looked at the prevalence of leg wounds due to poor circulation found that 7% of people receiving home care services and around 0.2% of people in the general population had wounds on their lower legs and feet.

Extrapolated to the Canadian population of 30 million, that is 60,000 Canadians with chronic leg ulcers.

Chronic wounds are also a common secondary complication of other medical conditions such as Diabetes. Approximately 2 million Canadians have Diabetes. It has been estimated from a multicenter trial in which Canadian centres participated, that 7.2% of persons with diabetes will develop foot ulcers in the next year. By extrapolation, that represents 144,000 Canadians who might develop foot ulcers in the next 12 months.

There are an estimated 90,000 Canadians with Spinal Cord injuries (SCI) resulting in paraplegia or quadriplegia. It has been estimated that 32-57% of individuals with SCI (28,800-51,300) will develop a pressure ulcer at some time in their life.

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