

Evidence to Decision Frameworks: Classification of Pressure Injuries

Clinical question	What are the most commonly recognized and used pressure injury classification systems and how do they relate to one another? What are the recognized characteristics of each pressure injury category (i.e. Category/Stage I to IV, unstageable pressure injury and deep tissue pressure injury)?
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Good Practice Statement 9.1	Differentiate pressure injuries from other types of wounds.
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Background: Accurate assessment of wounds and identification of their etiology is also important to inform the development and evaluation of pressure injury quality improvement programs, track pressure injury incidence and prevalence, evaluate quality indicators and, in some geographic jurisdictions, to calculate reimbursement and/or fines applied to facilities.¹

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE, WHEN AVAILABLE

Evidence to support the opinion (when available)	None
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Justification	Accurate assessment of wound etiology is essential for the development of an appropriate and comprehensive treatment plan that addresses underlying pressure injury risk factors.
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Clinical question What are the most commonly recognized and used pressure injury classification systems and how do they relate to one another?
What are the recognized characteristics of each pressure injury category (i.e. Category/Stage I to IV, unstageable pressure injury and deep tissue pressure injury)?

Good Practice Statement 9.2 **Use a pressure injury classification system to classify and document the level of tissue loss.**

Background: Pressure injuries are classified according to the amount of visible tissue loss using a pressure injury classification system.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE, WHEN AVAILABLE

Evidence to support the opinion (when available) None

Justification Pressure injuries are classified according to the amount of visible tissue loss using a pressure injury classification system. Pressure injury classification systems describe the extent of tissue involvement of a pressure injury.

Clinical question What are the most commonly recognized and used pressure injury classification systems and how do they relate to one another?
What are the recognized characteristics of each pressure injury category (i.e. Category/Stage I to IV, unstageable pressure injury and deep tissue pressure injury)?

Good Practice Statement 9.3 **Verify that there is clinical agreement in pressure injury classification amongst the health professionals responsible for classifying pressure injuries.**

Background: Pressure injuries are classified according to the amount of visible tissue loss using a pressure injury classification system.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE, WHEN AVAILABLE

Evidence to support the opinion (when available) None

Justification Numerous published studies have examined clinical agreement in pressure injury categorization/staging and reported interrater reliability for various pressure injury classification systems. These studies have either compared bedside evaluations of wounds or evaluated assessments of pressure injuries based on photographs. Across studies, interrater reliability varied, but was generally good to excellent for all classification scales.

References

1. Mahoney M, Rozenboom B, Doughty D, Smith H. Issues related to accurate classification of buttocks wounds. J Wound Ostomy Continence Nurs, 2011; 38(6): 635-642.