Pressure ulcer prevalence on admission to Sunnaas rehabilitation Hospital.

Introduction

Prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers (PU) is a main topic for nurses in the rehabilitation and in follow up of patients with spinal cord injury (SCI). Standardized screening on admission is recommended in international guidelines.

Methods

A prevalence study was carried out in the hospital using the European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel's (EPUAP’s) minimum data set for PU prevalence survey, as screening instrument. This instrument includes; skin observation with PU grading, risk assessment by Braden scale and preventive interventions. Nurses collected data prospectively within the first 24 hours of admission. A convenience sample of wheelchair bounded SCI patients was included during a 6 months period.

Results

The sample included 35 males and 6 females, age 18-80 years. Time since injury varied from <3 months to 40 years.

The prevalence of pressure ulcers was 56%, 11 tetraplegics and 12 paraplegics with PU grade I-IV. 31 patients was considered “at risk”, with a cut off score at 17 on Braden scale.

Preventive interventions were not adequate on admission for all patients with PU or at risk.

Discussion

Prevalence of PU was high in the sample. This is a small study with many limitations, but the results underline that focus on risk assessment and adequate prevention remains necessary.

Data on prevalence of pressure ulcers on admission can be useful in assisting care planning and evaluate patients’ outcome.