

How Many Wounds?

Wounds Canada Research Committee Study to Determine Availability, Accuracy and Gaps in Existing Data on Prevalence and Incidence of Wounds in Canada

By Michael Stacey, MBBS DS FRACS; Nicola Waters, PhD MSc RN;
Pamela E. Houghton, PT, PhD



The existing published data on the prevalence and incidence of wounds in Canada have been recognized by clinicians in the area of wound practice to have multiple deficiencies. As a result, estimates vary significantly.

The results will ... provide an accurate assessment of prevalence and incidence of wounds in Canada.

Data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information are commonly quoted for the prevalence and incidence of wounds. However, we know there are limitations to these data, since they are derived from databases that underestimate ulcer occurrence and do not differentiate among wound types.

Why is this important?

The lack of accurate data hinders health ministries and regional health authorities in planning resources for managing wounds. It also has an impact on researchers and health-care leaders in making a valid case for funding and programs that aim to improve the quality of wound care practice. In addition, the public remains unaware of the true impact of wounds on their health-care systems, and, as a result, they are less informed than they should be about key issues during election periods.

Objectives

The Research Committee of Wounds Canada is actively addressing this issue and undertaking an initiative with the following objectives:

- To conduct a systematic review to identify all reports and published articles that have estimated the prevalence of any wound type in health-care settings located in Canada and other countries; and from these articles, to determine factors influencing variations in the estimates of wound prevalence such as the methods used for data collection (e.g., chart review versus skin assessment) and compare the prevalence of common types of wounds occurring in Canadian health-care settings with those in other developed nations
- To locate, verify and collate existing sources of data that



would allow an accurate estimate of the prevalence and incidence of wounds in Canada (2000 – present)

- To determine gaps in the Canadian data related to wound etiology, geographical location and health-care setting

From this initial study, the committee will review the feasibility of preparing a grant application for prospective data collection for assessing the prevalence and incidence of wounds in Canada.

Research Plan

The Research Committee has formed a task group to identify and collate existing sources of data regarding the incidence and prevalence of various types of wounds that present in health-care settings across Canada. The number of people with commonly occurring wounds, such as pressure injuries, diabetic foot ulcers and lower extremity wounds, as well as surgical site infections and skin tears, will be estimated. In this way the burden of these

common conditions will be determined and gaps in the data identified. The study will indicate the methodologies used and analyze discrepancies between studies. The results will be synthesized to identify criteria, data collection and analysis methods that may be used to provide an accurate assessment of prevalence and incidence of wounds in Canada.

Output

The Research Committee Task Force will prepare a document for Wounds Canada summarizing the outcomes of this project as well as submit articles

“... a systematic review to identify all reports and published articles that have estimated the prevalence of any wound type in health-care settings located in Canada ...”

to journal publications. Where available, an accurate national estimate of the prevalence of different wound types will be provided to wound care providers and consumers for wide dissemination. 📄