

WOUNDS: A COMMON AND COSTLY PROBLEM FOR HOSPITALS

With acute and chronic wound cases on the rise, hospitals face many challenges – and opportunities

A GROWING CONCERN WITH STAGGERING IMPLICATIONS

Acute and chronic wounds are a growing national and global concern, driven by aging populations and the increasing prevalence of chronic conditions such as diabetes and obesity.

For hospitals, wounds present a common, costly problem: in the United States, acute care facilities treat an estimated 2.5 million patients each year for pressure ulcers.¹ According to The International Pressure Ulcer Prevalence Survey, the prevalence of pressure ulcers in hospital patients was 8.9% in 2015.²

The financial implications are staggering: a hospital-acquired pressure ulcer costs up to \$151,700 per patient for one hospital stay.³

Hospitals must also deal with the serious risk of wound-related litigation, which damages reputations and cuts deeply into budgets. Pressure ulcers alone lead to more than 17,000 lawsuits against hospitals each year.⁴ Also known as bedsores, these chronic wounds are the second most common reason for legal claims against hospitals, after wrongful death suits.⁵

THE WOUND CARE CHALLENGE FOR HOSPITALS

As the prevalence of chronic wounds continues to rise over the next decade at an expected rate of 2% annually,⁶ hospitals face significant clinical, administrative and financial challenges.

- + Ensuring consistent measurement and best practices across all departments.** Accurate data

¹ Reddy M, Gill SS, Rochon PA, [Preventing pressure ulcers: A systematic review](#) (Journal of the American Medical Association, August 23, 2006) 296(8):974-84

² Van Gilder C, Lachebruch C, Algrim-Boyle C, Meyer S, [The International Pressure Ulcer Prevalence™ Survey: 2006-2015: A 10-Year Pressure Injury Prevalence and Demographic Trend Analysis by Care Setting](#), (Journal of Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing, January/February 2017) 20-28.

³ Internet citation: Berlowitz DR, VanDeusen Lukas C, Parker V, et al. [Preventing Pressure Ulcers in Hospitals](#) (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality)

⁴ Internet citation: Berlowitz DR, VanDeusen Lukas C, Parker V, et al. [Preventing Pressure Ulcers in Hospitals](#) (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality)

⁵ Kim Petrone, MD, CWS-P, & Leanne Mathis, RN, BSN, MHA, CWS, CWOCN, [Pressure Ulcer Litigation: What is the Wound Center's Liability](#), (Today's Wound Clinic, September 6, 2017)

⁶ Healogics Inc., [Chronic Wound Epidemic Cited in U.S.](#) (Surgical Product Magazine, June 7 2016)

enables proper wound diagnosis and treatment, yet the commonly used ruler method for measuring and tracking wounds often yield inaccurate results. At the same time, many hospitals lack a consistent, organization-wide application of best practices in wound care. As a result, wounds can take longer to heal.

- + **Decreasing hospital-acquired conditions and re-admissions.** Preventing wounds from developing or worsening starts with complete and accurate baseline data at point of admission as well as ongoing monitoring that identifies at-risk patients and highlights gaps in care and non-compliance to wound care protocols. Implementing these strategies is an ongoing challenge for hospitals, which continue to see many patients acquire pressure ulcers while in their care, at a prevalence rate of 8.8%.⁷
- + **Improving the patient experience.** The traditional method for measuring wounds requires nurses to use a paper ruler around the wound area to gauge surface dimensions, and to dip a cotton swab into the wound opening to measure depth. This contact method is uncomfortable, even painful, for patients and puts them at risk of infection.
- + **Addressing the wound care knowledge gap among nursing staff.** The complex nature of acute and chronic wounds calls for evidence-based, specialized care.⁸ Yet in the U.S. there's only one wound nurse for every 500 patients diagnosed with acute or chronic wounds.⁹ For hospitals and other healthcare facilities, this translates into an urgent imperative to build wound care expertise among their care providers.
- + **Decreasing the cost of wound care.** Hospitals' total treatment costs for pressure ulcers can be up to \$151,700 per patient per hospital stay.¹⁰ This high cost can be attributed in part to the higher salaries of wound, ostomy and continence nurses as well as inefficient clinical and administrative workflows associated with traditional methods for measuring and documenting wounds. Such methods -- which typically use a paper ruler and cotton swab to measure, and pen and paper to log results and observations -- can consume a significant amount of a nurse's time at the bedside. At the end of their shift, nurses still need to enter wound information into the electronic health records system, adding up to three hours to a 12-hour workday.¹¹

⁷ Van Gilder C, Lachebruch C, Algrim-Boyle C, Meyer S, [The International Pressure Ulcer Prevalence™ Survey: 2006-2015: A 10-Year Pressure Injury Prevalence and Demographic Trend Analysis by Care Setting](#), (Journal of Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing, January/February 2017) 20-28.

⁸ [WOCN Society Position Statement: Role and Scope of Practice for Wound Care Providers](#) (Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society, March/April 2017)

⁹ [The War on Wounds in Hospice & Home Health](#) (Corstrata, April 26 2017)

¹⁰ Harold Brem, MB; Jason Maggi, MD; David Nierman; Linda Rolnitzky, MS; David Bell, BS; Robert Rennert, BA; Michael Golinko, MD; Alan Yan, MD; Courtney Lyder, ND; Bruce Vladeck, PhD, [High Cost of Stage IV Pressure Ulcers](#) (The American Journal of Surgery, October 2010) 473-477

¹¹ Laura A. Stokowski, RN, MS, [Electronic Nursing Documentation: Charting New Territory](#) (Medscape, September 12, 2013)

HOW CAN SWIFT HELP?

Swift Skin and Wound helps hospitals address the challenges of wound care and build excellence and leadership in this fast-growing field of health care. Swift does this by digitizing and automating the entire wound care management workflow -- from image capture and risk scoring to claims submission.

The Swift smartphone app makes capturing wound care information as easy as taking a photo. Swift Dashboards accessible from any computer or tablet display real-time healing and treatment data to help hospitals immediately identify risks and improve care. Together, these innovative tools address the many challenges of wound care management.

- + **Accurate wound measurement and built-in care protocols.** Swift Skin and Wound measures and documents wounds accurately and consistently to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment.¹² Best practice guidelines and glossary in the Swift App provide wound care information at point of care to clinicians and care providers in all departments.
- + **Complete baseline and healing progress records.** Swift Skin and Wound makes it easy for hospital staff to create comprehensive wound assessment records at time of admission, and to view wound healing history. Swift ensures best wound care practices are followed by integrating protocols into the the Swift App and alerting hospital administrators to wounds that need advanced care. The end benefits: decreased incidence of pressure ulcers acquired in hospital and less readmissions of wound patients.
- + **Touchless wound measurement and assessment.** With Swift Skin and Wound, clinicians can measure wound area and depth as easily as taking a photo. No more pressing or probing of the wound means greater comfort for patients and reduced risk of infection.
- + **Wound expertise always just a tap away.** Swift Skin and Wound gives hospitals the accurate information and resources they need for effective wound care management workflows, ensure compliance with wound care best practices, and turn their nurses into wound care experts. With Swift Skin and Wound, wound care best practices are always on hand. Timeline views of real-time wound data in the Swift App and Swift Dashboards make it easy for clinicians to consult and share information remotely with a physician, wound care specialist or skilled nurse.
- + **Cost-efficient wound care management.** Wound measurement and documentation with Swift Skin and Wound is 57% faster than the standard ruler method, helping hospitals better manage their human resources. Automated flow of wound care data from the Swift App to EMR and

¹² Sheila C. Wang, John A.E. Anderson, Robyn Evans, Kevin Woo, Benjamin Beland, Denis Sasseville, Linda Moreau, [Point-of-care wound visioning technology: Reproducibility and accuracy of a wound measurement app](#), (PLOS One, August 17, 2017)

administrative systems eliminates the need for clinicians to stay post-shift to transfer wound assessment information from paper to computer. With built-in wound care protocols and real-time views for easy remote consultations, Swift Skin and Wound enables wound care specialists to better plan their patient rounds to ensure they focus first on those who urgently need their wound expertise.

- + **A stronger defense against lawsuits.** An estimated 35% to 40% of pressure injury lawsuits are indefensible due to inconsistent or poor documentation.¹³ Accurate and complete wound care information with Swift Skin and Wound gives hospitals a more robust response to lawsuits.

DIGITAL WOUND CARE RISES TO THE CHALLENGE

By delivering accurate measurement and streamlining clinical and administrative workflows for wound care management, Swift Skin and Wound addresses all the key challenges of wound care management in hospitals. With Swift Skin and Wound, hospitals are well equipped to build excellence and leadership in wound care.

Better Is Waiting

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SWIFT SKIN & WOUND 

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¹³ Tim McVey, Avoiding Costly Pitfalls in Wound Care (McVey & Parsky LLC, October 28, 2011)