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### Are Quality Improvement Projects Improving Health Outcomes?

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# Are Quality Improvement Projects Improving Health Outcomes?

Erin Taborelli

## INTRODUCTION

- A pressure injury is a localized injury to the skin and/or underlying tissue as a result of pressure or pressure in combination with shear (Lewis, 2017, p. 172)
- Pressure injuries are significant health issues and one of the biggest challenges organizations face on a day-to-day basis (The Joint Commission, 2016)
- Hospital-acquired pressure injury (HAPI) is a clinically relevant and typically preventable condition identified by the National Quality Assurance Commission as a quality indicator of care (Henry, 2019, p. 161)
- Quality is a broad term that encompasses various aspects of nursing care. Various health care measures have been identified over the years as indicators of health care quality (Montalvo, 2007)

## SIGNIFICANCE

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that pressure injuries affect more than 2.5 million Americans annually, resulting in 60,000 deaths and a financial impact of 11 billion dollars (Henry, 2019 p. 161)
- In addition, more than 17,000 pressure injury-related lawsuits are filed annually in the United States, second only to health care-associated wrongful death lawsuits (Henry, 2019 p. 161)
- It is estimated that up to 50% of the most serious pressure ulcers/injuries are preventable or avoidable (Birkill, 2020)

## POSITION STATEMENT

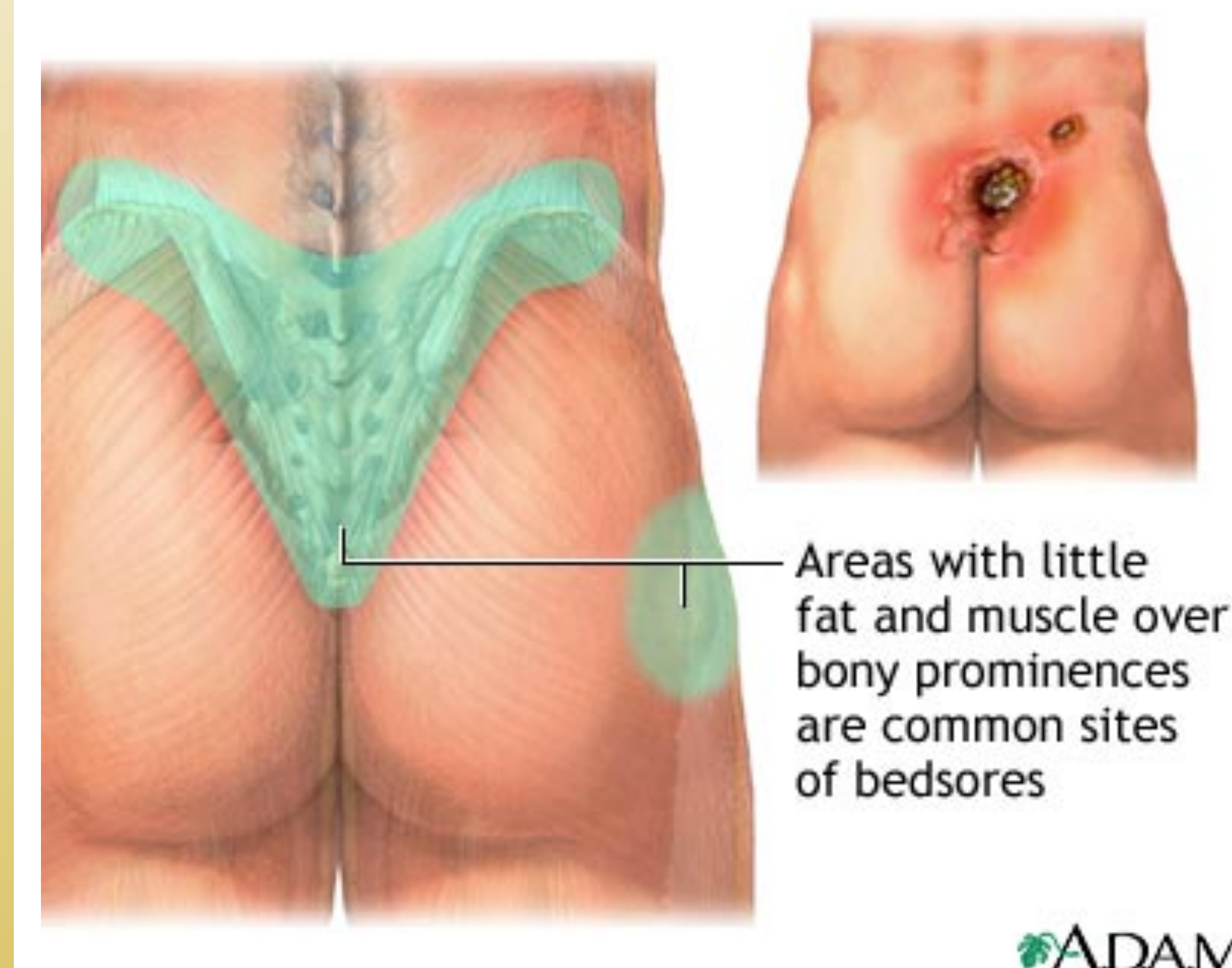
Quality improvement projects such as pressure injury prevention does improve health outcomes for patients.

## SUPPORT FOR POSITION

- “This quality improvement project focused on development and evaluation of a standardized education program for HAPI prevention. Staff knowledge and responses to a post-course survey indicated overall satisfaction with the educational program. Results of the QI project also led to positive results in the units that participated. I observed that nurses started to give more attention to actively preventing HAPI using the information provided in the education program” (Henry, 2019 p. 163)
- “This has been a valuable experience for both the tissue viability nurse and the clinical staff involved. Not only has it helped with cascading learning but it has also helped to understand the challenges and the educational needs pertinent to that individual ward. Engagement with front-line staff and understanding their issues can underlie successful implementation of organizational changes” (Birkill, 2020)
- “Pediatric patients, particularly neonates, are at risk for device-related ulcers. Heightened awareness, early detection, and identification of strategies to mitigate device-related injury are necessary to further reduce pressure ulcer rates” (Visscher, 2013)

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Quality improvement projects that work toward preventing pressure injuries are extremely important within Nursing. To evaluate the quality of the nursing care being given, quality indicators were created. Pressure injury prevalence is an important quality indicator. Through these quality improvement projects, nurses are educated on pressure injury prevention, requiring nurses to pay more attention to pressure injuries and increasing staff knowledge. Not only nurses, but the entire multi-disciplinary team must work together to provide highly routinized care tailored to each individual patient. These quality improvement projects also benefit the nurses, by providing them with the education they need to properly document the necessary information for pressure injuries. Proper documentation is extremely important among patients with pressure injuries. Ultimately, putting projects like these in place make the hospital setting safer for patients; decreasing hospital-acquired injuries, shortening their length of stay, and preventing any other issues from possibly arising due to a pressure injury.



## CONCLUSION

Quality improvement projects such as pressure injury prevention improve health outcomes for patients by decreasing their risk for hospital-acquired injuries, shortening their length of stay, and preventing any other health issues from occurring due to a pressure injury. It is vital that health care professionals work together with their patients and the same goals in mind. Pressure injury prevalence is a quality indicator of nursing, meaning that it is our job to be held to a certain standard when caring for patients and our goal to provide safe, meticulous care to prevent pressure injuries.

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