

Support Surface Selection: A Practice Evaluation

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Objectives/Outcomes:

1. Explore choosing therapeutic support surfaces not just for individual clients, but for facilities
2. Discover the results of our practice evaluation
3. Apply the lessons we learned to their own practice setting

In Canada the prevalence of pressure ulcers is 26.1% across all health care settings, with up to 70% of these ulcers considered preventable. Choosing an appropriate support surface in bed is a critical component of a pressure ulcer prevention and management plan, yet best practice guidelines offer little specific information on choosing the best support surface for an individual patient, or patient population.

The support surface selection tool was developed based on the available evidence to help clinicians choose the most appropriate support surface features for an individual patient or patient population. This tool uses the client's risk of developing a pressure ulcer, or if present the number of pressure ulcers in addition to the client's bed mobility status to determine the category of surface (i.e. reactive or active) most suitable. Decision trees then assist the clinician to determine which support surface features are required – e.g. powered, non-powered, overlay, mattress replacement, single zone, multi-zoned, low air loss etc.)

This tool was used to determine the support surfaces and features required by the residents of Louis Brier Home and Hospital. This information was then compared to the current inventory of support surfaces to determine the types of support surfaces requiring replacement. As Louis Brier had recently initiated a support surface replacement program, there was an opportunity evaluate the impact of the use of support surfaces chosen by an skilled clinician using this tool.

This workshop will explore how to use the therapeutic support surfaces tool to select surfaces for a patient population, followed by an evaluation of the impact of those surfaces on the client. The lessons we learned, and ideas for practice will be discussed so that participants can implement this information in practice.