Wounds West Project

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A lack of knowledge about the magnitude of wound epidemiology poses enormous challenges for healthcare providers: from the procurement and equitable distribution of resources; to demonstrating clinical governance and accountability for the continuous improvement in the quality of patient care; and to planning and delivering effective wound care to patients. The little reliable data available shows enormous variations in clinical practice and patient outcomes often due to the lack of equity and access to wound management services, equipment and education.

The Wounds West Project brings together audit, education and technology in a 3 years partnership between WA Health, Silver Chain and Curtin University to improve wound management across Western Australia. Since November 2006, Wounds West has completed 2 state-wide wound prevalence surveys of almost 6000 patients in 86 public hospitals across metropolitan, regional and remote WA; piloted a prevalence survey in the residential aged care sector; and established a website and online wound education program. Wounds West identified through the first state-wide wound prevalence survey ever completed in Australia that wound care is a major component of the daily business of WA public hospitals. The data showed that 49% of all patients had 1 or more wounds at some point in their hospital stay and that almost 19% of the total wounds were preventable hospital-acquired injuries.

Patients admitted to inpatient beds via Emergency Departments formed the largest proportion (45%) of the surveyed population and these patients accounted for 41% of all wounds identified ($n = 1175$). These results and the recommendations made to WA Health and individual organisations aimed to inform improvement initiatives and assist health providers better prevent and manage wound care.

As a direct consequence of the first Wounds West survey \$2.5 million in funding has been used to purchase pressure reduction equipment for public hospitals around the state.

In Years 2 and 3 Wounds West will develop and pilot an electronic wound imaging and remote expert referral system; build additional education modules and initiate the Wounds West Consultant Team. These consultants will be available to answer health practitioner's queries about wounds and wound care using the wound imaging system.

Wounds West has positioned WA Health as a world leader in helping health care providers confront the challenges of predicting, preventing and managing wounds.

Further information can be obtained from the website <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/woundswest>.

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FORENSICS/AGGRESSION

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Collaborative team approach to the early identification of domestic and family violence in an ED

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In 2005, a Personal Safety Survey of 17,300 Australians found that since the age 15 years:

- 1 in 3 women had experienced physical violence,
- 1 in 5 sexual violence, and
- over 1 in 6 experienced violence by current or previous partner.

Taking in to account other factors, illness, disability and premature death Domestic Violence has an estimated cost to the health system of \$8.1 billion.

A significant health problem that requires urgent attention is violence against women as it is extremely difficult for most women to disclose that violence is occurring, which makes the response of the first point of contact critical.

A Domestic Violence screening tool was introduced to Flinders Medical Centre's Emergency Department in November 2006.

The aim of introducing the screening tool was to:

- increase awareness of Domestic Violence,
- improve safety for women,
- offer early intervention, and
- link patients with Domestic Violence services in the community.

Prior to implementation the development and planning process involved five stages.

Data was collected resulting in internal and external evaluations occurred with ongoing processes for service improvement.

The Domestic Violence Screening Tool has been integrated into the initial assessment process in the ED for all women over the age of 16 years. Patient and staff information resources have been specifically designed for the Emergency Department.

A regional approach has also been adopted by sharing resources between community and public sector units to improve training and access to Domestic Violence services. This represents a movement towards adopting a shared governance approach to address the issues of Domestic Violence in the Southern Adelaide Health Region.

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