

P37 - A POINT PREVALENCE OF SKIN TEARS IN A LONG TERM CARE FACILITY IN EASTERN ONTARIO, CANADA (STUDENT POSTER)

Kimberly LeBlanc. KDS Professional Consulting.

Poster presented by Karen Campbell, Western University.

Contact: kimleblanc@rogers.com

Brief Description of Research or Project: Skin tears are painful wounds resulting from trauma to the skin and are largely preventable. They are often mismanaged and misdiagnosed, leading to complications, including pain, infection and delayed wound healing. Skin tears increase caregiver time and facility costs, and cause anxiety for patients and families. A point prevalence study conducted at a Long Term Care Facility in Eastern Ontario found a skin tear prevalence rate of 22%. The results of this prevalence study provide a much-needed first step in establishing a Canadian database on the prevalence of skin in the elderly population. **Why is this research important to profile at the Research Day 2014?** A literature review revealed limited literature addressing the prevalence, incidence or economic impact of skin tears on the global population. Early research estimated that 1.5 million skin tears occur each year in institutionalized adults in the United States. A 1994 study in a 347-bed facility in Western Australia demonstrated a 41.5% skin tear prevalence rate within its population. Studies of community settings have reported skin tear prevalence rates between 5.5% in known wounds amongst all age groups and 20% of known wounds in the veteran population. The prevalence and incidence of skin tears in Canada's elderly population has not been reported in the literature. While little is known about the prevalence rates of these wounds, it has been reported that in the elderly population these wounds are more prevalent than pressure ulcers. Despite this high prevalence, skin tears are frequently mismanaged. Health care professionals must understand which individuals are at risk for developing skin tears, and how to prevent these wounds from occurring. This article will discuss the findings of a point prevalence study of skin tears conducted at a Term Care Facility in Eastern Ontario. While further research is needed to determine the prevalence and incidence of skin tears across health care settings, the results of this prevalence study provide a much needed first step in establishing a Canadian data base on the prevalence of skin in the elderly population.