Pressure ulcers have a reported prevalence up to 25% (1). There is no consensus concerning best practices for prevention, and even modest reductions are noteworthy (2). Besides the cost in human suffering, treatment of pressure ulcers is calculated to be approximately $1,600 per patient per month (3), an expense totaling more than a billion dollars per year (4), borne mostly by Medicare and Medicaid (1).

Ways to prevent pressure ulcers and treat them in a cost effective manner are sorely needed.

**PURPOSE**

Evaluate a program of pressure ulcer prevention and treatment in two 150-bed nursing homes with a frail elderly population.

**METHODS**

A standard protocol was developed and used for prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers. Program was developed based on efficacy and simplicity. This involved two key elements:

1. Static air pressure support for mattress, chair and heels, and
2. A medicated hydrogel dressing.

Two separate nursing homes adopted and followed the protocol, one for prevention, the other for treatment in their wound center.

**PREVENTION**

In one nursing home, incidence of pressure ulcers acquired in the facility was reduced from 17% to zero in six months, and was maintained at less than 1% for four years.

**TREATMENT**

In the inpatient wound center, all patients (72) with pressure ulcers were treated according to the standard protocol, and treatment success over a one year period approached 95% within 12 weeks with average cost savings over $6,000 per patient.

**RESULTS**

Dramatic sustained reductions in pressure ulcer occurrence were achieved with use of static air support surfaces in a population of frail elderly. Equally dramatic treatment and healing of pressure ulcers in this population were achieved with the combined use of static air support surfaces and a medicated hydrogel dressing. These simple yet effective solutions should be examined more thoroughly in other settings.