

Occupational Therapy in the prevention and the treatment of pressure sores

Louise De Serres¹, Mona Drapeau²

¹*Institut de réadaptation Gingras-Lindsay de Montréal, Montréal, Québec, Canada,* ²*CSSS la Pommerais, Cowansville, Québec, Canada*

There are few writings on the roles of Occupational Therapists in the prevention and intervention of pressure sores. As exposed by Giesbretch (1), referrals in O.T. are usually done when pressure sores are already observed, thus, prevention is retarded even though the cost related to treating pressure sores and the impact of them on the social participation of the person are so important.

OBJECTIVE:

This conference will present how the O.T., with her global approach, her specificity in activity analysis, daily routine and the environment, contribute to the interdisciplinary team to prevent and treat pressure sores. The roles of the O.T. will be addressed in relation with a model of practice specific to O.T. (MCRO) and another one used by the interdisciplinary team (PPH).

The O.T. has a crucial role in the search of the causes of pressure sores in relation particularly with daily activities. The visual observation of the sore is important to understand underlying mechanisms. The use of a risk factor scale is also recommended to screen high risk patients and therefore, optimize prevention. The O.T. will proceed to a global assessment to then analyse the links between all the factors involved in relation to the person in his or her environment. The treatment plan can include activities to increase mobility, equipment to redistribute or reduce pressure (cushions, therapeutic surfaces) as well as education to increasing awareness of postural hygiene. Ethical and spiritual values are also taken into consideration.

Although the material and professional resources are different in emerging and industrial countries, the basic principles of prevention and intervention of pressure sores have common bases in all systems (private, public and universal). No matter the work setting, the profession is growing and it is time for the Occupational Therapists to assert their full professional potential within the interdisciplinary team to prevent and treat pressure sores.

1. Giesbretch E. Pressures ulcers in occupational therapy practice : a canadian perspective. Canadian journal of occupational Therapy. 2006; 73 (1), 56-63.