Title: Perioperative Pressure Reduction: Looking Beyond the Surface

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Background: Pressure ulcers after surgery are a devastating consequence that may be reduced or eliminated through proactive perioperative assessment and planning.

Objectives: To reduce the risk of postoperative pressure ulcers

Implementation: An initiative at The Methodist Hospital to reduce postoperative pressure ulcers was designed with consultation from wound care specialists. An evidenced-based tool to identify preoperative patients at highest risk was created. The assessment tool was tested and validated for accuracy. A pressure mapping device was utilized to determine the quality of existing surgical table pads in multiple surgical positions compared to commercially available pads. The postoperative stretcher mattresses were also mapped for pressure reducing properties. Many myths associated with surgical padding have been dispelled during this project. The therapeutic quality of the surface(s) is most important.

Successful Practice: Pressure reducing operating room pads have been identified and are in the process of being purchased. PACU stretcher mattresses are now being evaluated. This will provide a comprehensive pressure reduction program for the perioperative patient.

Implications: Justification and determinations of quality replacements for operating room table pads and postoperative surfaces are being based on this information. Patient outcomes will be evaluated on a continual basis. Future studies will include pressure mapping of perioperative patients over time.