

The Case of Insufficient Communication Between Care Teams

Improving Skin Care and MDRO Prevention in Long-Term Care



The Case

Mr. Simmons is a 70-year-old man with mild dementia, a previous history of congestive heart failure, and chronic lower extremity edema. Almost 2 weeks ago he bumped his foot while transferring into his wheelchair. Since then, he's had a wound on the outside part of his right foot that has been slow to heal.



The Challenge

Since he bumped his leg, the bathing team made sure to not get skin near or around his wound wet. They did not want to make anything worse or cause an infection. The wound care team last checked on the wound about 5 days ago. Today, the bathing team notices that there is no longer a dressing on his foot. When they look at the wound, they note that his foot looks more swollen, red, and painful than normal.

The Error

The error has been occurring since he bumped his foot. The wound care team only assessed the wound. The bathing team focused on the dressing changes and did not clean the skin under the dressing. The wound care team did not want to get the dressing wet and did not clean the skin around it.

Knowledge Check Questions

1. What could the bathing team do in the future to improve the care of this resident?

- A. Train and empower the bathing team to clean skin around wounds.
- B. Call in support from the wound care team to assess the wound.
- C. A and B.

2. How can the facility ensure that this mistake does not happen again?

- A. Coordinate communicative care between the bathing and wound care team.
- B. Incorporate directions into routine order sets for both the bathing and wound care team.
- C. All of the above.

Rationale

Rationale for question 1

Once the bathing team recognized the red and painful skin on the resident's foot, one of them should have asked his nurse or the wound care team to come in and assess the wound. Additionally, it is important that the bathing team receive proper education on how to clean the skin around wounds to prevent an infection.

Rationale for question 2

The nursing home needs to find a way to make sure that good skin care does not stop when a dressing is applied. This means coordinating care, having a sense of what people in other roles are doing when they provide care, and communicating about those processes.

