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# Primary Care Patient Safety (PISA) Research Group - Identifying priorities for pressure ulcer prevention in primary care

## BACKGROUND

Pressure ulcers are harmful and largely avoidable. They cause needless pain and suffering for patients<sup>1,2</sup> as well as increased morbidity, mortality and length of hospital stay.<sup>3,4</sup> As a result, pressure ulcer prevention is a priority area for patient safety in healthcare organisations internationally.<sup>5-7</sup> The majority of efforts have focused on improving pressure ulcer prevention and treatment in secondary care, but an opportunity exists to advance pressure ulcer prevention in primary care.

Patient safety incident reports contain free text descriptions of unsafe or poor quality care that are written by frontline healthcare professionals when any untoward event resulted in, or could have resulted in, harm to a patient.<sup>8,9</sup> Such reports contain information, which can be used to model the sequence of events leading up to harmful outcomes, as well as the related contributory and contextual factors.<sup>10,11</sup> In England and Wales, a National Reporting and Learning Service (NRLS) was established in 2003 as a repository to enable the generation of learning from safety incident reports.<sup>12</sup>

The Primary Care Patient Safety (PISA) Research Group led by Dr Andrew Carson-Stevens at the School of Medicine, Cardiff University, aims to advance the quality and safety of primary care through identifying learning from data like patient safety incident reports to support organisations and their teams to empirically design/ redesign their systems and to develop, test, implement and evaluate

changes in practice. The PISA Group was formed in January 2013 with funding from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) in order to characterise the largest sample of patient safety incident reports from general practice worldwide.<sup>13</sup> To date, the PISA group has undertaken analyses of safety incident reports describing problems in care for patients during the transfer between secondary and primary care,<sup>14</sup> vaccine safety in children,<sup>15</sup> vulnerable children in primary care<sup>10,16</sup> and safety incidents experienced by children in the general practice setting.<sup>17,18</sup>

In collaboration with international experts from the Australian Institute for Healthcare Innovation (Hibbert and Makeham), the PISA group is examining free-text patient safety incident reports describing pressure ulcers written by frontline healthcare professionals with a view to identifying priority issues for pressure ulcer prevention in primary care and supporting the development of interventions.

## METHODS

The PISA Group uses a three-stage mixed methods process to generate learning from a sample of reports received by the NRLS over a decade (2003-2013):

- **Stage 1:** Familiarisation and data coding – reading free-text and applying codes to represent the incident type, potential contributory factors, level and type of harm described in the safety incident report.
- **Stage 2:** Generation of data summaries – descriptive statistical analysis to identify the most frequent and harmful incident types.

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■ **Stage 3:** Interpretation of themes and learning – thematic analysis to understand the most common safety contributory themes, and consideration of the contexts within which they occurred. Clinicians and patient safety experts review the analyses to identify key areas for improvement in pressure ulcer prevention in primary care.

The method is described in more detail in a recently published study protocol.<sup>13</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This study will be the first national-level (England and Wales) analysis of patient safety incident reports from primary care about pressure ulcers. It will empirically iden-

tify concepts to inform a quality improvement agenda for pressure ulcer prevention in primary care. When this study is completed in Spring 2016, its findings should be interpreted in conjunction with existing research and development efforts in the field of pressure ulcer prevention in primary care.

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