**Title:** Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Pressure Injury Prevention for Diverse Skin Tones at Trillium Health Partners

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Research indicates that patients with darker skin tones are often diagnosed with higher-stage pressure injuries due to inaccurate assessments and delayed identification (Black, et al., 2023). Trillium Health Partners (THP), a 1500-bed community hospital, has prioritized pressure injury prevention since 2019, achieving a sustained reduction in overall hospital-acquired pressure injuries (HAPI) well below the national benchmark.

In 2023, THP began to focus on early identification of pressure injuries in patients with darker skin tones aligned with RNAO Best Practice Guidelines. This initiative included updating standards and policies for prevention, assessment, and management of stage 1 and 2 injuries to incorporate staging across diverse skin tones. Education was enhanced for new staff during orientation, wound care education offerings for all staff and for our leadership teams.  Further, recognizing patient diversity, THP implemented the Monk scale in pressure injury audits to capture critical data on varying skin tones, addressing a notable gap in the literature and healthcare resources.

With these interventions in mind, a significant decrease in HAPI was observed from March 2023 (4.8%) to September 2023 (2.8%) and sustained to the March 2024 audit (3.9%). Notably, there was a decrease in the both the frequency and severity of pressure injuries amongst patients with Monk scale ratings of 6-9 in the March 2024 audit (4 stage 2) compared to previous audits in September 2023 (6 stage 4, 3 unstageable) and March 2023 (1 stage 1, 8 stage 2, 6 stage 3, 1 deep tissue injury). These outcomes indicate improved HAPI prevention efforts in darker skin tones, and suggest promising results aligned to the quintuple aim.

Tailored education and policies focusing on pressure injury staging across skin tones can decrease the incidence and severity of pressure injuries. Broader education on nursing assessment is essential for delivering holistic care to our diverse community.

**References**

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