



## A pressure ulcer by any other name

Just when we think we've figured out pressure ulcer staging, it changes again. In April 2016, the National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (NPUAP) held a consensus conference on staging definitions and terminology. The purpose: to analyze and discuss the rationale for the panel's changes. One of the key changes is replacing the term "pressure *ulcer*" with "pressure *injury*." So instead of calling it a pressure *ulcer* staging system, NPUAP will refer to it as a pressure *injury* staging system. The panel explained that the new terminology "more accurately describes pressure injuries to both intact and ulcerated skin."

Other changes include:

- use of Arabic rather than Roman numerals in the stage names
- modified descriptions of each individual stage (although the underlying definition of each stage remains the same.)

The revised staging guidelines, along with new schematic artwork for each stage, are available for **free download**.

More than 400 people attended the conference. (I assume most were experienced in wound care.) I wasn't able to attend, so I reached out to several clinicians who did and found that their reactions were mixed. Here are some of their responses:"

- "I was surprised the updated pressure injury guidelines were released so soon."
- "This was presented by industry experts. I preface what I am about to say with this comment because of the concern I had with the updated staging system by end of the meeting."

- "During a picture review of wounds, incorrect responses were greater than 40%. What became frightfully obvious to me was that if the experts were having trouble identifying the wounds correctly, [it would be even more difficult for nonexperts]."
- "I thought the process would serve to simplify and clarify. I'm not so sure it accomplished either."
- "Was any thought given to how the changes will affect the conflicts between clinician documentation and the various mandatory reimbursement tools used in different healthcare settings?"

Obviously, comments were all over the board, but I did note a common theme: *confusing*. Based on attendees' feedback, I urge wound care clinicians to read the new guidelines carefully and take care in implementing them. And keep in mind what Shakespeare said: "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." So pressure ulcers, now called pressure injuries, will still require the skilled care of expert clinicians.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Sardina".

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### Online Resource

[A.npuap.org/national-pressure-ulcer-advisory-panel-npuap-announces-a-change-in-terminology-from-pressure-ulcer-to-pressure-injury-and-updates-the-stages-of-pressure-injury/](http://A.npuap.org/national-pressure-ulcer-advisory-panel-npuap-announces-a-change-in-terminology-from-pressure-ulcer-to-pressure-injury-and-updates-the-stages-of-pressure-injury/)