Ethical practice in pressure ulcer prevention

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Abstract
With the view expressed by Hibbs in 1985 that 95% of all pressure ulcers were preventable why, in 2013, are they still a costly, distressing and life-threatening major public health issue? Nurses are integral to the promotion of good practice and are in a key position to remove or alleviate the factors leading to their occurrence although it is accepted that it is not always possible to remove intrinsic factors such as age, medical conditions and medication. It is however likely that the incidence can be reduced by other means.

Against the backdrop of reduced health care budgets and shrinking staffing levels can nurses be considered neglectful or abusive for allowing pressure ulcers to develop? In the UK the Nursing and Midwifery Council aims to protect the public by ensuring that nurses and midwives provide high standards of care for their patients and clients through its standards for education, practice, provides advice for nurses and midwives and considers allegations of misconduct. The NMC Code clearly outlines that nurses have a responsibility to protect clients from all forms of abuse. Abuse may take many different forms and may be physical, psychological, and verbal or manifest as neglect.

This presentation explores the responsibilities enshrined in professional regulation relating to responsibility, privacy, dignity, compassion, accountability, autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice and touches on what we as nurses should be doing when patients are non-compliant/non-concordant.

KEY WORDS: abuse, ethics, accountability, advocacy, negligence, legal issues.

Biography
Maureen has extensive experience as a senior nurse in emergency nursing, orthopaedics and as a specialist in tissue viability before becoming a senior lecturer 10 years ago at the University of Chester, UK. She authored a book on evidence based wound management in 2005, has published over 170 articles in reputed nursing journals and reviews for several national and international journals. She is a Trustee of the Tissue Viability Society, member of the European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel, maintains membership of several ethics and biomedical ethics committees. For over 12 years she has been providing expert medicolegal advice and litigation reports, and works as a Specialist Advisor to the Care Quality Commission which regulates National Health and independent healthcare organizations.