How to Prevent Decubitus Ulcers in Japan

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Abstract:
In Japan the new law has started to prevent decubitus ulcers since 2 years ago. Our situation has changed dramatically not to leave them as before. I'd like to explain the effect of that new system to get better result.

Introduction:
The decubitus (pressure) ulcer had been neglected until the recent decade in Japan. Unfortunately, it was quite natural to accept, even for medical staffs, that the bed-ridden patients had decubitus ulcers. On the other hand, the nurses have been educated in the school to accept that decubitus ulcers are caused by the failure of nursing care. Against this warning, the nurses had better hide them than to prevent them. Another fact is that the staff also had not protested their less responsibility to manage decubitus ulcers. As a matter of fact, the ulcers used to appear on the back of the body, in the supine posture we can not find them easily if not rolled over upside down.

Materials and method:
There came a big breakthrough in October 2002. The new law started at that time in medical insurance. This law was established under the penalty system. We must work out these three items if we don't want to pay back to medical agency 50 yen per one patient a day. The 1st item is about "team approach". The members consist of every part of the hospital, i.e., not only doctors or nurses, but also dieticians, pharmacists, PT, OT and the staffs of the supplies department. The team has a roll of a leader and a watcher and an adviser to the decubitus care of the whole hospital. The 2nd item is to make an assessment to find out high-risk patients to prevent or treat the ulcers systematically. The nurses fill much information in a proper form just after admission and so on. The 3rd item is to settle up enough equipment to prevent the ulcers by either buy or rent. Actually, these are so many kinds of mats to choose from. Our hospital decided to spend for many mats and other things to change the older ones. These three items above show that we must investigate both intrinsic and extrinsic factors to solve the problem of decubitus ulcers.

Results:
Two years have passed from the beginning of that system. We've got the better situation now. The technique to the wound is also changing from the customary to scientific way supported by EBM. I believe this law has changed our situations better than before.