

The Use of a B.A.S.E.[™] RECLINER MAT Cushion System with a Nursing Home Resident

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Case Study

Mrs Green is an 81 year old lady who suffers from Alzheimers disease. Her condition had deteriorated to the extent that she found it difficult to communicate and became easily agitated. Mrs Green had a Waterlow score of 23 (*Waterlow, 1988*), her diet and fluid intake were poor and she required hoisting in order to transfer from bed to chair. Mrs Green had poor sitting balance and was only able to sit in a 'bucket chair'. She was clearly uncomfortable in the chair for a number of reasons. Mrs Green's posture had fixed changes; her pelvis had rotated posteriorly and as a



result, excessive weight was taken on the sacrum, leading to the development of a Grade 2 (*EPUAP, 1999*) pressure ulcer. Her spine showed evidence of compensatory changes due to the position of the pelvis: the spinal column had become kyphosed and the spinous processes had become prominent close to the skin surface, causing concern regarding potential pressure damage, as the skin was starting to become reddened. Mrs Green was unable to reposition herself in the chair and was constantly agitated due to her discomfort, so the decision was made to keep her in bed until a suitable solution could be found.

Method

The two main goals of equipment provision were to provide adequate postural support and pressure

relief. The B.A.S.E.[™] RECLINER MAT cushion was secured in position on top of the seat and back surface of the bucket chair. This aimed to increase Mrs Green's comfort, reduce the existing pressure damage and prevent further pressure damage both on the sacrum and the spine.

Results

Mrs Green was able to sit out of bed for short periods of time, particularly at meal times and staff reported how much easier she was to feed in this position. Her sitting balance was more stable and staff reported an improvement in her posture. The pressure damage on her sacrum healed during the period of the evaluation and continues to remain free of damage. The skin covering the spine also looked healthier, with no further evidence of redness. The staff reported two other unexpected benefits of enabling Mrs Green to sit out of bed. Firstly, she became far more alert, taking some interest in her surroundings and secondly, she became far less agitated. Staff felt that her reduction in agitation was directly linked to her increase in comfort and sitting stability.

Conclusion

This case study demonstrates the positive benefits that can be achieved by providing a person with appropriate seating equipment to meet his/her specific needs and how the B.A.S.E.[™] RECLINER MAT cushion was able to reduce pressure damage, whilst increasing posture and comfort. By enabling Mrs Green to start getting out of bed again her feeding improved and her agitation diminished.