

# Raising awareness of the risk of facial harm from device-related pressure ulcers: initial measures in practice

## KEY WORDS

- » Medical device-related pressure ulcers
- » Facial harm
- » Prevention
- » Awareness
- » Visual aid
- » Poster
- » Improvement

In our practice we observed that medical devices appeared to be contributing to an increase in pressure ulcers (PU), resulting in facial harm. The aim of this work was to reduce preventable harm to patients by reducing medical device related pressure ulcers (MDRPU) on the face. To accomplish this aim raising awareness of facial harm was paramount as existing preventative measures centred around reducing PUs to more traditional sites. It was felt the most effective method to achieve this was with a visual aid. We developed a poster with an acronym to make it simple and eye catching design to attract attention. The poster proved successful in highlighting facial harm from devices, which instigated further improvement work and was awarded the Excellence in Innovation Award at the Golden Jubilee Staff Excellence Awards in 2017.

This project began when we identified a significant increase in the number of hospital-acquired category II or above pressure ulcers. Following a review of risk data exported from Datix reports, MDRPUs were found to be the main cause of preventable harm. The most common site harmed by MDRPU was found to be the face, with this in mind our aim was to target a reduction in preventable PUs with the main focus to reduce harm to our patients' faces and to educate staff in the process.

During the PU validation process performed by the Tissue Viability Specialists, it was evident that clinical staff involved in the delivery of care needed more awareness and understanding of device related pressure damage on the face and the associated preventative measures available. All our current care interventions centred around the prevention and reduction of risk of acquiring PUs on traditional sites such as sacrum, heels, elbows.

Therefore, the need to raise awareness of the risk of facial pressure ulcers from devices was paramount in order to implement improvement work identified to reduce harm.

After considering several options, the most effective method identified was to develop a visual aid for clinical staff in the format of a poster.

## DEVELOPMENT

We discussed several barriers to effective observation and agreed that, to be effective, it would need to be something short but memorable, and that also captured and delivered the key message.

From that discussion the acronym **ACE** was developed to capture the key elements required for caring for devices on a patient's face:

- » **A**=Assessment
- » **C**=Care and Repositioning
- » **E**=Education.

A slogan accompanied this 'ACE to protect your face', and simple stand out design was achieved using bright primary colours and the common 'smiley face' emoji. This was useful attract attention to the poster as well as maintaining its simplicity and the emoji a familiar visual from text speak.

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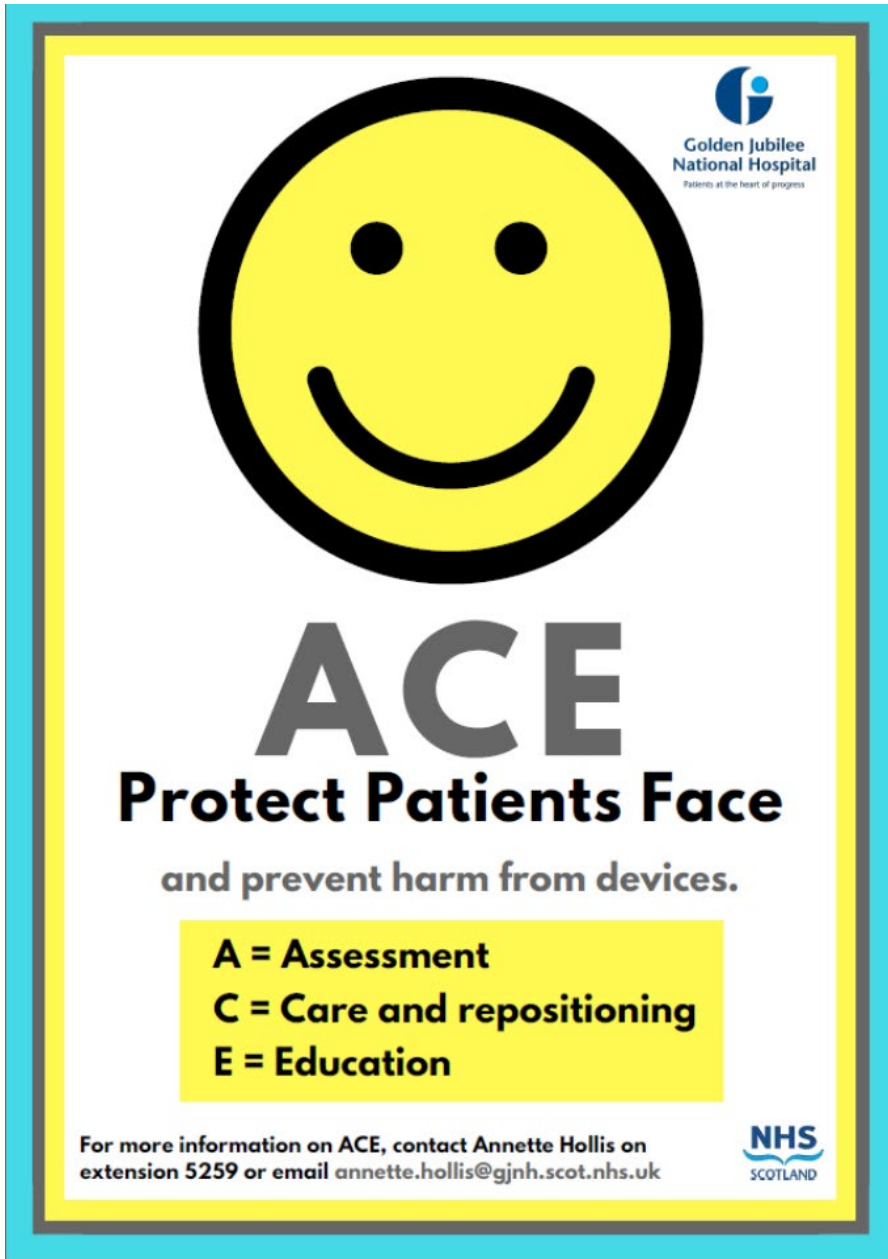


Figure 1. The final poster design

The poster was designed in draft and a consultation period of three weeks began, allowing feedback to be obtained from clinical staff before printing and cascading wider for display throughout the hospital.

The detail on the poster was kept deliberately succinct and the evaluation that supported this was helpful to promote understanding of the key factors required to reduce harm.

## RESULTS

The poster helped raise awareness about the risk of facial harm from devices across the hospital. This led to a short life working group being developed to target other identified MDRPUs. The first remit of the group was to target facial harm from endotracheal tubes and tape, which is currently in progress and initial signs of improvement are positive.

The poster was used as a training aid during our Tissue Viability education sessions to enhance staff knowledge and support their understanding of the importance of reducing the risk pressure ulcers in both traditional sites and other uncommon areas at risk.

## DISCUSSION

The period of consultation was beneficial as a test of change. It allowed staff to be involved in the process, which promoted ownership while producing a visual aid that was fit for purpose by the key stakeholders.

The posters slogan was changed from 'Protect Your Face' to 'Protect Patients Face' following staff feedback. Some staff reported to feeling confused and understood 'Protect Your Face' to insinuate their own faces through use of masks (Figure 1). Therefore, it was changed to diminish any confusion and ensure maximum impact of its purpose.

## CONCLUSION

The creation of a simple acronym and colourful poster has proven to be an effective way to help raise the profile of the risk of facial harm from medical devices across the hospital. It is also a reminder to patients and their visitors of the standard of care expected during their stay with regards to skin integrity.

The Senior Tissue Viability Nurse was awarded The Hospital Innovation Award in 2017 for its simplicity but impact of its effectiveness contributing to the reduction of harm. WUK

## REFERENCES

Golden Jubilee Foundation (2017) NHS Golden Jubilee Staff Awards. <https://tinyurl.com/y65u25gg> (accessed 10 August 2020)