

**INCONTINENCE AND
PRESSURE SORE CARE: A
SURVEY OF RESIDENTIAL AND
NURSING HOMES FOR THE
ELDERLY IN LIVERPOOL**

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1997

SUMMARY

A substantial number of elderly people who require higher levels of continuing care reside in either nursing homes or residential homes. There has been a relative dearth of research within the UK regarding aspects of institutional continuing care, with more research having been undertaken in the USA. Since 1990, UK purchasers and providers have been charged with adopting population based approaches for the identification of health and social needs used as the basis for commissioning and contracting local services. Since the implementation of the NHS and Community Care Act in 1993 there has not been a great overall change in the pattern of provision of long term care, although recently there has been an increase in domiciliary services to the elderly within their own homes, in keeping with community care policy. Residential care still constitutes an important and large sector for the continuing care of the elderly. Two notable areas of continuing care that pose problems for both residents and staff are the management of incontinence and pressure sore prevention and care. Pressure sores and incontinence incur sizeable costs for individuals and carers in terms of morbidity, suffering, workload, resources and finance. There is still little documented evidence of the processes practised within nursing and residential homes that contribute to the assessment, prevention and management of both pressure sores and incontinence. If services and care are to be based upon the needs of individuals and populations then information on incontinence and pressure sore status of residents within nursing and residential homes is essential for purchasers and providers contracting for continuing care services and for the review of outcomes.

A postal survey of residential and nursing homes for the elderly in Liverpool was undertaken during 1996-1997 using a semi-structured questionnaire (n=84; 38 nursing homes and 46 residential homes). The objectives were:

- to estimate the point prevalence of incontinence and pressure sores in homes for the elderly within Liverpool
- to collect information relating to the assessment, prevention and management of incontinence and pressure sores in homes for the elderly
- to explore differences between the residential and nursing sectors in assessment, prevention and management procedures