



Extended Research Article

Effectiveness of surgical interventions in patients with severe pressure ulcers: the SIPS mixed-methods exploratory study

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Plain language summary

Effectiveness of surgical interventions in patients with severe pressure ulcers:
the SIPS mixed-methods exploratory study

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Plain language summary

What was the question?

Is it feasible to research how well an operation to treat severe pressure ulcers works?

What did we do?

We reviewed previous studies about the effectiveness of surgery and the impact of a severe pressure ulcer on health-related quality of life. We surveyed surgeons, specialists and community nurses and general practitioners who manage patients with severe pressure ulcers to identify which people with severe pressure ulcers would benefit most from surgery. We analysed information about patients who have had severe pressure ulcers to find out how many operations are being carried out. We compared health outcomes for patients with severe pressure ulcers who had and did not have surgery.

What did we find?

Reviewing previous studies added very little to what was already known because high-quality research on the questions we asked has not been done. The surveys showed that healthcare professionals generally agree about who should be offered surgery. They also highlighted that decisions for individual patients were complicated and barriers exist to patients having surgery. It was difficult for us to identify exactly how many operations had been done but, between 2011 and 2018, the number of operations done in the National Health Service has been very low (estimated as between 54 and 136 per year).

What does it mean?

We found that the National Health Service carries out too few operations to treat severe pressure ulcers to enable future high-quality research on the cost-effectiveness of surgery. For people who might be suitable, the opportunity to have surgery varies in different parts of the United Kingdom. If patients in areas with limited opportunity had the same opportunity as those in areas with more opportunity, such research would probably be possible. The National Health Service should find out whether patients are suitable for surgery early on, and patients willing to consider an operation should be referred to a surgeon to discuss the appropriateness of surgery.

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This article

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