# PSI #3: Pressure Ulcer

**NQF#:** Not NQF Endorsed  
**Developer:** Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)  
**Data Source:** CMS  
**Description:** Stage III or IV pressure ulcers or unstageable (secondary diagnosis) per 1,000 discharges among surgical or medical patients aged 18 years and older.  

**Rationale:** Pressure ulcers have been associated with an extended length of hospitalization, sepsis, and mortality. An estimated 60,000 U.S. hospital patients die each year from complications due to hospital-acquired pressure ulcers. The prevalence of pressure ulcers in health care facilities is increasing. Incidence rates vary considerably by clinical setting, with incidence rates ranging from 0.4% to 38% in acute care settings.  

**Evidence for Rationale:**  

**Numerator:** Discharges with any secondary ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes for pressure ulcer and any secondary ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes for pressure ulcer stage III or IV (or unstageable).  

**ICD-9-CM Pressure ulcer diagnosis codes:**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7070</td>
<td>DECUBITUS ULCER</td>
<td>70704</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, HIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70700</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, SITE NOS</td>
<td>70705</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, BUTTOCK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70701</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, ELBOW</td>
<td>70706</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, ANKLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70702</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, UPR BACK</td>
<td>70707</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, HEEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70703</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, LOW BACK</td>
<td>70709</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, SITE NEC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ICD-9-CM Pressure ulcer stage diagnosis codes (required for discharges Oct 1, 2008 or later):**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70723</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, STAGE III</td>
<td>70725</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, UNSTAGEBL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70724</td>
<td>PRESSURE ULCER, STAGE IV</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Denominator:** Surgical or medical discharges, for patients aged 18 years and older. Surgical and medical discharges are defined by specific DRG or MS-DRG codes. Exclude cases: length of stay of less than 3 days; principal ICD-9-CM diagnosis code for pressure ulcer; secondary ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes for pressure ulcer present on admission and any secondary ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes for pressure ulcer stage III or IV (or unstageable) present on admission; any-listed ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes for hemiplegia, paraplegia, or quadriplegia; any-listed ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes for spina bifida or anoxic brain damage; any-listed ICD-9-CM procedure codes for debridement or pedicle graft before or on the same day as the major operating room procedure (surgical cases only); any-listed ICD-9-CM procedure codes for debridement or pedicle graft as the only major operating room procedure (surgical cases only); transfer from a hospital (different acute care facility); transfer from a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) or Intermediate Care Facility (ICF); transfer from another health care facility; MDC 14 (pregnancy, childbirth, and puerperium); missing gender, age, quarter, year, or principal diagnosis; principal or any secondary ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes present on admission for major skin disorders (ICD-9)  

**Impact:**  
- Large number of patients affected  
- The prevalence of pressure ulcers in health care facilities is increasing  
- An estimated 60,000 U.S. hospital patients died each year from complications due to hospital-acquired pressure ulcers.
Evidence of High Impact:

Opportunity:
- Opportunity for improvement exists, as demonstrated by the coefficient of variation for the measure.

Evidence:
- A literature search of clinical trials, meta-analyses, systematic reviews, or regulatory statements and other professional order sets and protocols was performed, and the quality and strength of evidence was weighted according to a given rating scheme.
- Evidence ratings vary from Class A to Class R, with the vast majority rated from Class C to R.
  - Class A: Randomized, controlled trial
  - Class B: Cohort study
  - Class C: Non-randomized trial with concurrent or historical controls, case-control study, study of sensitivity and specificity of a diagnostic test, population-based descriptive study
  - Class D: Cross-sectional study, case series, case report
  - Class M: Meta-analysis, systematic review, decision analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis
  - Class R: Consensus statement, consensus report, narrative review

Citations for Evidence:

http://www.qualityindicators.ahrq.gov/Downloads/Modules/PSI/V60-ICD09/TechSpecs/PSI_03_Pressure_Ulcer_Rate.pdf