

IAD explained

Incontinence-associated dermatitis (IAD) is regarded as a new healthcare-related condition and therefore medical professionals have struggled to understand it and the terminology related to its diagnosis.



Professor Fiona Coyer

Sometimes referred to as perineal dermatitis, this is an inflammation of the skin associated with exposure to urine or stools. Babies, the elderly and especially those in long-term care facilities are at risk of urinary or faecal incontinence, which results in IAD.

Some of the symptoms include itching and burning from raw skin folds, which is aggravated by washing the skin with non-pH balanced soap and water.

Main challenges

Professor Fiona Coyer, recently paid a visit to Johannesburg, where she highlighted some of the [main challenges with treating IAD](#), which include it often being misdiagnosed and mistaken for a stage two pressure ulcer.

She holds a joint appointment as a professor of nursing with the School of Nursing, Queensland and the University of Technology and Metro North Hospital Health Service in Australia.

“IAD is a worldwide healthcare problem. Reported prevalence of IAD in residential to acute care healthcare facilities varies from 18-50%.”

“We don’t always know it when we see it and therefore it poses assessment challenges. We often don’t know what to call it which then results in the use of inconsistent terminology/terminology confusion,” explains Prof. Coyer.

Undue risk factors

“We aren’t sure how it happens and this lack of knowledge results in undue risk factors. We also don’t always know what to do about it, which is compounded by the lack of evidence-based guidelines and protocols.”

As a result, a best practice principles document; *Incontinence-Associated Dermatitis: Moving prevention forward* has been published.

Down to Zero campaign

Prof. Coyer was visiting the country as part of the Down to Zero educational campaign, aimed at spreading awareness about IAD.

The campaign is the result of discussions with various hospital groups, identifying key quality issues like peripheral line complications, catheter-related blood stream infections and skin breakdown.

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