

## HAPI Panel of Experts Topic of the Month – May 2019

### Multiple Layers of Linens

#### Introduction

How many layers of linens are appropriate beneath a patient, and how can we ensure patients are not placed on more than the proper number of layers? The Tennessee Center for Patient Safety’s HAPI Panel of Experts provides their perspectives and recommendations in this report.

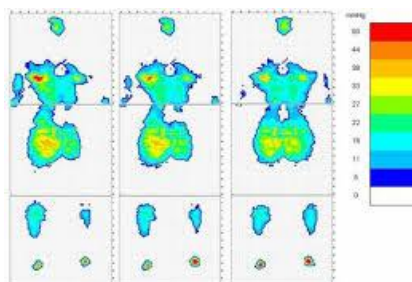
#### How many layers?

“Less is best” is the consensus among panelists regarding the number of layers beneath a patient. The bed vendor for one panelist’s hospital stated there should never be more than four layers between the surface of the mattress and the patient, however, this panelist and others generally strive for no more than three. A common bed set-up, for example, is a fitted sheet, a patient repositioning sheet (i.e. TAP, Glide), and a disposable pad. Specialty beds may require different set-ups.

#### How to ensure compliance?

Panelists provided several great ideas on strategies for ensuring compliance.

- Gain support from nursing leadership.
- Discuss linen layers in nursing department meetings.
- Discuss linen layers during meetings of pressure injury prevention champions.
- Round and audit beds to assess the number of layers and provide “just in time” teaching.
- Recognize and celebrate staff that follow best practice.
- Discuss linen layers in shift huddles.
- Include information about linen layers in WOCN communications to staff.
- Discuss linen layers in new nurse orientation and in nurse residency programs.
- Partner with Environmental Services on proper bed set-up.
- Develop a “layer guide” for staff that addresses different beds, products, and patient situations.
- Partner with local CNA and nursing schools to ensure information about linen layers is included in their curriculum. Give feedback to clinical instructors when incorrect student behavior is noted.
- Include linen layers in skills day education. Ask a bed or skin product vendor to bring a pressure map to skills day and place it on a bed. Have staff lay upon it with varying layers of linens and different positions, such as elevated HOB, and note how the pressure map changes.



Common Practices that Contribute to Excess Layers	Recommended Solutions
Placing a layer under the fitted sheet to protect the patient from moisture on a recently-washed mattress.	Take time to dry the mattress before applying the fitted sheet.
Placing multiple sets of sheets/pads under incontinent patients to save time with frequent linen changes.	Use only one set on the bed at a time. Keep supplies in a convenient location for frequent linen changes.
Using incontinence briefs in addition to incontinence pads.	Eliminate briefs and use only incontinence pads.
Frequent turnover of Environmental Services staff and CNAs.	Provide education frequently. Audit bed set-ups frequently.



The HAPI Panel of Experts is a group of wound care and quality professionals that represent hospitals of varying sizes and geographic regions of Tennessee. The Panel convenes monthly to discuss a topic specific to pressure injury prevention and share their practices and recommendations.

**Panel of Experts**

**Jennifer Vandiver**, BSN, RN, CWON - West Tennessee Healthcare

**Julie Brandt**, MSHA, BSN, RN, WOCN - Erlanger Health System

**Lauren White**, MBA, BSN, RN - Vanderbilt University Medical Center

**Robert Summey**, BSN, RN, CWOWN - Holston Valley Medical Center

**Sonya Clark**, RN, CWOCN - Henry County Medical Center

**Suzanne Kuhn**, RN, CWS - Delta Medical Center

If you would like to suggest a topic for the Panel to discuss, please email your request to Rhonda Dickman at [rdickman@tha.com](mailto:rdickman@tha.com).