

'Dolphin pads' help prevent bedsores

April 3 2009, By Blythe Bernhard

They say dolphins are smart, and now people are borrowing a technology that was first used on the mammals.

The pads the military uses to transport trained [dolphins](#) are now being used during [surgeries](#) to prevent bedsores in patients.

Because they live underwater, dolphins' skin and organs are highly sensitive to pressure. The "dolphin pads" simulate a low-pressure water environment for the mammals when they travel. The Navy employs the dolphins to find underwater explosives because of their superior sonar ability.

[Human skin](#) can also be damaged under pressure. Studies suggest as many as one in 12 patients will develop a pressure sore in surgeries lasting three hours or longer.

More than 20 hospitals nationwide have purchased the pads from a Florida company called Biologics.

Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, for example, installed them on 30 operating tables in October at a cost of \$16,000 each through a grant from the hospital's foundation.

"We do a lot of surgeries, we do all ages with all different kinds of medical conditions, and we wanted to make sure we had everybody as safe as possible," said Colleen Becker, the hospital's director of patient care in surgical services.

The pads automatically adjust to any changes in position, blood flow or temperature to help release pressure on patients' skin.

"The mattress will reallocate the weight of the patient's body automatically," said nurse Sally Favaloro. "It senses the gravitational pull of the patient."

The pads can't be used for procedures that use radiation, so they aren't in every operating room. Regular in-patient beds have other alternative surfaces, and those patients tend to have more movement. Pads may be purchased for emergency room beds in the future, Becker said.

MORE ONLINE

For more information on the pads and how they help in moving dolphins, visit www.biologics900t.com

(c) 2009, St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Visit the Post-Dispatch on the World Wide Web at www.stltoday.com/

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.

Citation: 'Dolphin pads' help prevent bedsores (2009, April 3) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-04-dolphin-pads-bedsores.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--