

Rutgers-Camden nursing scholar develops tool for ostomy care

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Nurses caring for ostomy patients will now be equipped with an essential new tool that provides them with the first comprehensive guide to optimize ostomy management and enhance patient safety.

Janice Beitz, a professor at the Rutgers School of Nursing–Camden, was part of a research team that developed the ostomy [algorithm](#), a step-by-step aid that allows nurses to properly assess ostomy patients and their needs.

"The majority of ostomy care is provided by non-specialized clinicians or caregivers and family members who do not have ostomy care expertise," Beitz says. "There is a clear need for evidence-based guidelines in this area."

Beitz, a Cherry Hill resident who specializes in acute and chronic wound, ostomy, and continence care, is also part of a team that is developing an interactive online version of the algorithm for use on computers and mobile devices. ConvaTec, a leading developer of innovative medical technologies for community and hospital care based in Skillman, N.J., is funding the project.

The algorithm consists of 11 assessments, beginning with the type of ostomy, and provides a pathway that leads to the selection of the best ostomy management option.

"It helps guide nurses through what they need to think about when they're taking care of a patient," Beitz says. "We found that this algorithm brings [nurses](#) up to a higher level of safety when treating patients, which was our goal."

The algorithm is scheduled to be published in the "*Journal of Wound Ostomy and Continence Nursing*" in January.

"ConvaTec supports research that impacts the delivery of safe [patient care](#) through the

development of products that are proven safe and efficacious, as well as the evidence behind care delivery while using those products," says Victoria Schafer, an associate director of medical affairs at ConvaTec. "The ostomy algorithm produced by the research team Dr. Beitz is a part of lives up to the company's philosophy of making an impact on the lives of our customers."

It is estimated that between 500,000 and 800,000 Americans are living with an ostomy. Beitz says that given the aging population, more people are developing medical conditions that require an ostomy.

"It's our role as care providers give them the best care possible," she says. "We want to create the blueprint for choosing the safest and best product."

Provided by Rutgers University

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