

Assistance to the wound care patient: a challenge still open

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Wound care used to be more of an art than a science, but thanks to contributions from different disciplines, wound healing is now firmly based on science and clinical evidence in a holistic view of the patient. This means not only focusing on the specific wound requiring treatment, but also trying to observe and understand the overall health of our patient. Such an approach requires a range of skills coming from discipline as medicine, physiology, psychology, engineering and patient care.

The management of the patient with skin lesions, a subject that is often underestimated, requires targeted and timely interventions through the creation of specialised and multidisciplinary teams that can accompany the person throughout his or her treatment, guaranteeing equity of treatment.

In Italy, the situation is uneven, and citizens from different regions often do not have the same access to the treatments delivered by the healthcare system. By comparing the different care pathways for patients with skin wounds, we can highlight the level of equity and accessibility of care in the national context and raise awareness for the implementation and improvement of healthcare services.

The incidence of skin lesions in hospitalised people ranges from 4 to 9% and increases by 10-25% in the elderly. It is often the primary cause of hospitalisation, as in the case of diabetic foot, burns, reconstructive surgery or lower extremity injuries due to vascular problems.

The epidemiological evolution of healthcare needs and problems highlights the increase and transversality of users with skin injuries; for example, in the home setting, more than 2/3 of the home care requests is related to the management of skin injuries. This highlights the need for healthcare professionals with appropriate skills and abilities to manage an injury through the wound care best practice.

Chronic wounds represent a major public health challenge in Italy and abroad. In fact, there are common problems to be faced by the healthcare professionals: heterogeneity of tools, criteria and monitoring systems, assessment of appropriateness of choice and treatment, diagnostic and therapeutic pathways and continuity of care, development and maintaining of expertise and special skills, as well as the creation of multidisciplinary teams, and access to medical equipment.

The various associations and scientific societies also aim to develop special skills, improve care pathways, develop research and disseminate evidence-based best practice in collaboration with institutions, professional bodies and patient groups.

AISLeC, Associazione Infermieristica per lo Studio delle Lesioni Cutanee (Nursing Association for the Study of Skin Lesions), is an interdisciplinary association entirely dedicated to the study and research of skin lesions of various aetiologies and is the first Italian scientific society to develop actions in the field of wound care. Celebrating 30 years of activity, AISLeC acts as a scientific reference point, developing the skills of professionals by emphasising innovation and research, and promoting appropriate dissemination not only among professionals but also among institutions and citizens.

AISLeC's choice is to promote the value and importance of science in the training of professionals as a guide to clinical and organisational decision making, and to pursue the development of integration of skills and multidisciplinary as essential in the management of skin wounds.

The European Wound Management Association (EWMA) also aims to promote the implementation of high quality, interdisciplinary and cost-effective wound

care in order to address the problem of skin wounds in a comprehensive manner. To achieve its objectives, EWMA acts as an educational resource, organises conferences, contributes to international wound management projects, actively supports the implementation of existing wound management knowledge and provides information on all aspects of wound management.

The European Congress is another opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved in the field and what we can achieve in the future.

The theme of this year's congress, Wound care - from art to science, will be held in Milan from 3 to 5 May. The conference is organised together with the Nursing Association for the Study of Skin Lesions (AISLeC) and in collaboration with the Italian Association of Cutaneous Ulcers (AIUC). During the conference, participants can attend to scientific sessions with a mix of new topics of importance to the European wound community, as well as topics that have been successful at previous EWMA conferences.

We look forward to seeing many of you in Milan from 3-5 May.

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