



SAfW Swiss Association for Wound Care

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EWMA welcomes the Swiss wound organisation and look forward to a mutually beneficial co-operation.

History and creation of the Swiss Association for Wound care

The organisation of Swiss health professionals working in the field of wound care was made separately by Cantons: each one answering to specific structural and organizational realities as well as its cultural and linguistic sensibilities. In spite of these differences, the proposed objectives and implementation strategies in each Canton were very similar. It was logical, therefore, that sooner or later, these individual groups would join and evolve into the creation of a national association – the Swiss Association for Wound Care (SAfW).

However, as the linguistic barrier presents a real difficulty to overcome in Switzerland, this association has two entities: a Germanic section for the representatives of the German-speaking Cantons and a French section for the French-speaking members.

Furthermore, a postgraduate course in wound care and healing is proposed in these two entities, thus answering the identified need for education and development of quality practice.

The Swiss medical, sanitary, political and organizational issues depend on the competence of Cantons (regions). Hence while they re-

spond to general directives edicted by the Federal State, each Canton establishes its own laws, organizations and public health structures.

The field of health insurance remains within federal competence. Basic insurance is compulsory and covered by health insurances on a common and minimal basis. Complementary insurance is optional and covers a variety of listed acts. Both forms of insurances are subscribed to on a private basis.

Interest in wound care and healing arose in both the German and French parts of Switzerland. It first became formalized in the German part of the country with the creation of an association (SAfW) in 1997. Set up by Professor Urs Brunner, a surgeon interested in wound care and healing, it aimed to develop medical and nursing skills in this field and promote national and inter-regional communication in this matter. An annual congress was organized covering different wound care and healing themes, the need having being highlighted by the organization comity. An internet site was initiated as well as a yearly journal on different topics in wound care. The French parts of the country were invited to actively participate but ultimately, owing to the language and cultural difficulties, the society was dominated by German speakers. In response to this, local wound care groups emerged in the French-speaking parts of Switzerland. Most of these groups were created through the initiative of motivated nurses working in wound care, a few of them having followed a specialised training outside the country (e.g. in wound care and/or in stomatherapy). Representing a variety of medical institutes, by means of a survey, these groups highlighted the lack of education in the field of wound care as well as a variety of different practices specifically concerning prevention and the treatment of pressure ulcers. In order to bridge this gap these groups identified the same overall following goals:



From left to right:
S. Laeuchli – Vice-President – SAfW – German Switzerland
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- Education in prevention of pressure ulcers in medical/social homes for elderly patients
- Creation of reference documents for pressure ulcer prevention and practical education by means of courses given by the members of the group
- On-line, specialized advice to be made available
- Organization of an annual training day

Year after year, the different groups joined forces to organize an annual congress. The number of participants steadily rose year after year to reach, in 2004, 350 participants.

In turn, the union around the yearly congress and the growing interest in wound care allowed the establishment, this year, of a distinct association in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, the SAfW French-speaking section. A collaboration is being developed to share our practice and reference documents within our regions as well as to develop standards in daily practice across both French and German-speaking Switzerland. A recognized network was also established with the help of the health industry to promote education; organize annual congresses and promote education issues. An active participation in international congresses was noted. However it became evident to the two main linguistic regions in the country that, in order to work more efficiently, two separate sections under one common umbrella association were necessary.

Two distinct and separated societies do not mean lack of union on national matters, each association works independently in its region but remains strongly linked for strategic actions, for example, coping with national, political and regulatory issues. A close link is ensured through a national bureau and through the internet. A yearly congress organized for the French region in spring and the German region in autumn enables participants to attend either one or both.

Postgraduate courses have recently been organized in both regions, thus enabling better specialization.

The common objectives are to:

- gather together professionals (doctors and paramedics) with experience and interest in wound care to promote their knowledge in this field; develop education issues; share reference documents and experiences, while developing contacts and research projects
- establish international contacts to promote educational and research projects in order to increase our level of expertise in this field and develop collaboration and exchange of experiences with our international colleagues. This will be facilitated by the participation of one of our vice-presidents in the EWMA comity this year.

Diabetic Vascular Disease & Wound Complications



The aim of this meeting is to update our knowledge base but with a focus on measurements. There will be keynote lectures, scintillating scientific sessions featuring, oral and poster presentations and workshops.

Selected abstracts will be published in International Journal of Lower Extremity Wounds.

For further information and abstract submission please visit:

http://vmrg.som.soton.ac.uk/southampton_2005.html

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