



SaFW

Swiss Association
for Wound Care
(German section)

www.safw.ch



SaFW

Swiss Association
for Wound Care
(French section)

www.safw-romande.ch

SaFW – Switzerland

Switzerland has a population of 7.8 million inhabitants and more than 300,000 persons suffer from a chronic wound. These wounds have a negative impact on the quality of life of the patients and their families.

More than ten years ago, the idea of moist wound care started to be widely accepted amongst the few medical doctors who had made the treatment of patients with chronic wounds their main focus of interest. Industry had also come up with a variety of modern wound dressings to make wound treatment possible according to modern standards. However, wound care has always been a multidisciplinary field and it was difficult to get the message of how to apply modern principles to wound care across to the many health professionals involved in the field.

In this context, the Swiss Association for Wound Care (SaFW) was founded in 1996 by a vascular surgeon, the late Prof. Urs Brunner. It currently has over 500 members in the Swiss German part and over 150 in the Swiss French part, including specialised wound care nurses, MDs of different specialties (e.g., vascular surgeons, dermatologists, diabetologists), and representatives of other health care professions dealing with chronic wounds and palliative wounds.

Switzerland is made up of four linguistic communities (German, French, Italian and Romansch). Hence, in a second step, the French-speaking members created their own association in order to facilitate the organisation of continuing education events in their linguistic areas. In a third step, under the auspices of the Swiss German section, the Swiss Italian section was founded.

The two associations co-operate closely in all matters of national interest, especially where professional political issues are concerned.

The main purpose of the Swiss Association for Wound Care is to promote modern wound care. This is done through education and the establishment of interdisciplinary co-operation and education of specialised wound care nurses and MDs as well as the promotion of scientific projects in this area.

The education of wound care specialists is a mainstay of the SaFW. In 2004, for the first time in Switzerland, SaFW co-operated with the Association of Swiss hospitals (H+) to provide a course leading to a diploma in Wound Care. Since its inception, there have been 400 graduates from this diploma program. In line with the Bologna educational reforms in Europe which allow greater mobility between universities with a uniform credit point system, as of this year, a course leading to a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Wound Care will be offered in collaboration with a Swiss university (WE'G in Aarau). For the French-speaking

students, a similar certificate of advanced studies has been offered for four years by the University for Nursing Skills in Geneva (HEDS), which also participates in EWMA's UCM model. For the Italian-speaking students we provide a course leading to a wound care expert certificate offered by SaFW and the higher school of nursing in Bellinzona. Further wound care courses on different levels like a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) or a Master in Advanced Studies (MAS) in Wound Care will be developed.

Furthermore, the association is the primary partner of the health authorities where regulatory and professional political matters in wound care are concerned. For example, SaFW cooperated with the Swiss Society of Dermatology on a mandate of the Swiss health ministry to establish guidelines for the use of bioengineered skin substitutes and certification of MDs and centres allowed to employ these expensive, but highly effective procedures. In addition, the SaFW collaborates with industry and other care providers to define reimbursement for wound dressings as well as the negative pressure wound therapy (NPWT). Furthermore, SaFW established criteria for wound care clinics to ensure that the patients and their families receive the care they need.

SaFW also supports scientific wound care studies with a substantial sum each year to enhance research around the topic of wound care. Additionally data for statistical purpose from registered wound care centres all over Switzerland are collected for analysis to improve wound care services. The annual symposium on modern wound care, which is held separately in the Swiss German, the Swiss French and the Swiss Italian parts of the country is very popular amongst health professionals in wound care in Switzerland, each attracting hundreds of participants.

SaFW maintains regular contact and co-operation with the German and Austrian Associations for Wound Care (DGfW, ICW and AWA) as well as with the French and French-speaking society for wound care (SFFPC). SaFW, with other international wound care societies, is actively engaged in promoting wound care in underprivileged settings.

Three of the German-speaking societies (AWA, ICW, SaFW) publish a German language wound care journal, *Wundmanagement*, which is their official organ of communication and which is in the process of acquiring Medline accreditation. The French-speaking SaFW is associated with the French journal of wound care. In 2011 the three associations from Germany, Austria and Switzerland founded a German-speaking wound care organisation called DACH. This new organisation will organise a symposium in 2013.