

FLAP SURGERY CANCELLED AND NINE PRESSURE ULCERS CLOSED THROUGH THE USE OF POLYMERIC MEMBRANE DRESSINGS

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Introduction: A 30-year-old tetraplegic man suffered for 18 months from a grade 4 pressure ulcer on his right hip. The ulcer was 6,5 cm x 4 cm with 3 cm undermining.

Flap surgery was postponed due to necrosis and infection. At arrival to the rehabilitation center, he also had eight grade 3 pressure ulcers and a fistula, duration ranging from 6-18 months. These ulcers were caused by a pain-induced spasticity in the legs.

Aim: To clean up the grade 4 hip wound so the flap surgery would be possible.

Methods: Polymeric membrane dressings often provide significant wound pain relief. The dressings also contain ingredients which draw and concentrate healing substances from the body into the wound bed to promote rapid healing, while facilitating autolytic debridement by loosening bonds between the slough and the wound. These unique dressings add moisture to dry wounds while absorbing excess fluid.

Polymeric membrane dressings, with polymeric membrane wound filler, were used on all cavities. Dressings were changed 3 times a week. The patient also had a pressure relief program.

Results: All grade 3 ulcers closed after four weeks treatment with polymeric membrane dressings. After 2 weeks the necrosis and infection had resolved in the initial grade 4 ulcer. After 5 weeks the undermining was filled in and the size of the ulcer decreased to 6 x 2,6 cm. Flap surgery was no longer considered necessary! After 9 weeks of using polymeric membrane dressings, the patient could continue this wound treatment at home. Six months later, the grade 4 ulcer was closed.

Conclusions: After suffering from multiple pressure ulcers for 1,5 years, changing dressings resulted in the complete closure of all grade 3 ulcers in 4 weeks. His grade 4 ulcer closed in 7 months, saving the patient from plastic surgery.