

COSTS OF WOUND MANAGEMENT IN FINLAND

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The biggest part of the costs of wound management consists of nursing personnel's use of time. It is estimated that about 80% of the costs are salary costs and social security costs. Wounds that need to be managed at home, local anesthesia and mechanical cleansing as well as guidance of patient and documentation of nursing operations increase the visiting nurse's use of time. Visiting nurse's time can be saved, if she has with her all the necessary equipment and tools in order to reach good nursing results and if she doesn't need to queue in the pharmacy to buy the wound management products for the patient. In order to reduce wound management costs it is necessary to start efficient and right nursing immediately. Costs to be paid by the municipality are increased by laboratory sample costs and other examination costs. Special health care operations, for example dermatoplasty and collet operation cost to the society hundreds of thousands of euros annually. For example according to Päijät-Häme central hospital nursing price list three days care package for diagnostic leg or aorta cervical angiography costs 967 euros and leg wound management with an operation costs 3762 euros. Pain, suffering, physical and mental effects increase the costs, but it is difficult to calculate them in euros.

Costs arising from wound management are difficult to sort out. Calculated costs are only indicative estimates on the costs that wound management cause in reality. Patients who are nursed at non-institutional services, institute or at hospital are seldom diagnosed on the basis of a wound. Most wound patients have some illnesses, which are reasons for the wounds. Wound care costs arising at non-institutional care are always case and locality specific.

Wound management costs are fairly significant on the national perspective. There are no exact figures available. Exact valuation of the wound management costs is complicated by the fact that old patients normally have wounds which are consequences of some other illnesses and in that case something other than the wound is being compiled in statistics. Costs related to the wound management can neither be calculated from the prices of the operation packages priced by, for example, special health care. For example price for dermatoplasty operation is only a fraction of the whole wound care process costs. Neither wound management before and after the operation nor patient's suffering or fear can be calculated in euros.

Under cost pressure it should be considered by which kind of measures the costs could be reduced, what kind of services related to the wound management will be guaranteed and in what way those can be developed for the future. Significant savings could be reached by centralizing the wound management; at the same time it would improve patient's position and access to nursing, which should be realized along with the care guarantee.