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WOUND MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATION – CAN YOU HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER?

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Wound management is a daily responsibility for many involved in patient care. Effective wound management involves a systematic assessment of patients' risk factors, planned interventions to reduce or eliminate these risk factors and an evaluation of the success or failure of interventions. Changes in the traditional delivery of health care, combined with a better informed consumer have led to a more questioning approach to care delivery. These changes demand of the health service increasing accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, however, with limited resources in order to achieve these goals. Therefore, those wishing to justify continued investment in current practice, or conversely, development of new innovative methods of care delivery, are expected to be explicit in their requests. This explicitness has to include evidence-based material to support arguments, which importantly incorporates the impact of the intervention on the patient. The means by which the practitioner meets the changing demands of health care is through ongoing education. Education provides the framework through which knowledge and skills in wound management are developed, thus ensuring competency in this aspect of patient care. This paper will discuss the role of education in wound management; in particular the focus will be the effect of education on clinical practice.