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METAANALYSIS ABOUT THE ETIOLOGY OF 36606 PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC LEG ULCERS IN GERMANY

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Introduction: The etiology of chronic leg ulcers is very heterogeneous. Even if the prevalence and incidence of chronic leg ulcers seem to increase in Europe data on these patients are insufficient available only. Therefore the aim of this study was determine the etiologic spectrum of chronic leg ulcers in Germany.

Materials and Methods: We compared the results of three own clinical investigations regarding the diagnosed etiology of patients with chronic leg ulcers in Germany. Different populations of experts were asked to complete a standardized questionnaire. Moreover we objectified the etiology in patients from our own wound-centre.

Results: We were able to analyze the data of 36606 patients with chronic leg ulcers. As expected vascular diseases were the most important causes. But beside venous and arterial insufficiency especially different types of vasculitis demonstrate to be a relevant factor. Altogether we identified 12 different etiologies like pyoderma gangrenosum, infection, neoplasia or calciphylaxis. In 20% of all patients no venous or arterial etiology could be found so that rare causes are in summation are not as rare as expected. But we found distinct differences in the diagnosed etiologies of leg ulcers regarding the profession of the asked experts groups.

Conclusion: Even if our results are probably not representative for Europe, we analyzed with 36606 patients the greatest population with chronic leg ulcers in Germany. Our results demonstrate that beside venous and arterial insufficiencies there exist a lot of other potential relevant etiologies.