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## AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INCIDENCE, CAUSES, PROGRESSION AND TREATMENT OF PRE-TIBIAL LACERATIONS IN THE ELDERLY

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**Aim:** The aim of this paper is to present data collected following a project investigating incidence of pre tibial lacerations (PTL's) in 2 Accident and Emergency Departments (A & E), current practice and effectiveness of their management

**Methods:** A systematic literature review was undertaken to determine current state of the evidence in PTL's; a prospective cohort observation/audit of current practice and management of PTL, including healing time, complications, and infection rates. Using a combination of a patient data electronic recording system and direct observational data in the accident and emergency departments, patients were identified who presented with a skin tear/flap laceration sustained to the skin anterior to the tibia and then followed up for a three month period. Demographic, biochemical, co-morbidity and skin tear data were retrieved or recorded.

**Results:** The literature search and review demonstrates that there is considerable information on specific dressings but less evidence in overall interventions and management. Results from the prospective observation of patients presenting with PTL's, have highlighted that incidence within the 3 month period of data collection is low, (n=19); however care interventions for treatment and management were varied dependent upon the practitioner's personal preference as to choice of treatment.

**Conclusions:** Further analysis of the prospective study data is required to establish treatment changes as patients progress from acute to primary care services. Whilst incidence is low, the potential for high cost and intensive service intervention in those patients who do not readily heal, is high.