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EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX PROTEIN: REBUILDING LIVES NOT JUST WOUNDS

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Introduction: A lady aged 76 underwent excision of sarcoma and radiotherapy to her thigh. Unfortunately, the wound broke down and failed to heal.

Initial review at eight months post operation the visible wound bed was sloughy, exudates purulent and copious, and the wound tracked 9.5 cm one direction and 1.5 cm the other direction. Total wound size was 42 cm³. The dressings were changed at least daily and her quality of life was severely compromised. The consultant advised that if the wound failed to improve then she faced an above knee amputation.

Aim: After several interventions the decision was made to try a topical application which, once applied to the wound bed, provides a temporary extracellular matrix protein for cell attachment.

Method: Over a 10 week period the extracellular matrix protein was applied to the wound bed weekly. A delivery system using an intravenous catheter was devised to ensure the product reached the end point of the tract.

Results: After 10 weeks the exudate had reduced sufficiently to allow the dressings to be changed weekly. By month 8 the volume of the wound had reduced to 1.6 cm³ i.e. 96% of wound healing.

Conclusion: At the point of submission treatment is ongoing but we are confident that total wound healing will be achieved and more importantly this lady will have her life back. The extracellular matrix has played a part in rebuilding their lives as well as the wound.