

# **News from the Association of Nurses for the Study of Cutaneous Lesions (AISLeC)**

## **ABOUT AISLeC : WHO WE ARE**

Founded in Italy in 1993, AISLeC (Associazione Infermieristica per lo Studio delle Lesioni Cutanee – Nursing Association for the Study of Cutaneous Wounds) is a multidisciplinary, nonprofit association.

The AISLeC Executive Committee is responsible for establishing the Association's policies, directing its activities and approving all actions in relation to the management of the Association. The election for members of the Executive Committee takes place every three years.

Membership of the Association is open to all disciplines of health professionals interested in the management of wounds. Actually there are approximately 500 members including nurses, physicians, podiatrists, pharmacists, physical therapists, nutritionists, and other healthcare professionals.

AISLeC and its members are committed to improving the quality of care provided to people with wounds, acute or chronic, through education, clinical practice, public policy and research.

## **WHAT WE DO (OR TRY TO DO)**

As the Italian population ages (11 million over 65 years of age and near three million over 85. ISTAT 2006), the incidence of chronic wounds is expected to rise significantly, as well as the frequency of so-called "complex wounds".

Providing care to a patient with a chronic and/or complex wound poses a significant challenge given that this kind of wound requires *"skills, knowledge and attitudes of healthcare professionals... to initiate effective therapeutic strategies in a timely and cost-effective way"* (EWMA, 2008)

In Italy, we identified two main issues to be addressed. Firstly, there is a knowledge deficit amongst medical, nursing and allied health personnel in regard to the current concepts in wound healing and wound management. Consequently,

there is the need to incorporate “best practice” care in wound prevention and treatment in all health care sectors for more efficient and effective wound management.

Secondly, the fragmented way in which wound care is delivered to patients within our health care system (in terms of health care organization, services, reimbursement, etc) is a major obstacle to a more homogenous wound care practice: consequently there is the need to support access to timely and appropriate resources necessary for the prevention and treatment of wounds.

In order to overcome these barriers, we realise that appropriate strategies and action plans had to be developed. The association's efforts are focused on following key areas:

- **ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- o encouraging a multidisciplinary approach – although it was a group of nurses who formed AISLeC, there was a strong recognition among these nurses that a number of other professionals play an active role in the care or prevention of wounds
- o facilitating networking amongst practitioners with knowledge and expertise in wound management in order to promote the sharing of ideas and positive contributions
- o creating a unified national approach to wound prevention and management
- o liaising and cooperating with other national/international associations interested in wound management and Evidence Based Practice
- o being recognised as an authoritative body that consults with, and advises government, governing bodies, and health care providers in regard to wound care management strategies based on current validated research

- **EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- o providing a range of educational resources.
- o AISLeC develops regular basic courses to conform knowledge of the health care professionals on the

modalities of assessment, prevention, and treatment of acute & chronic wounds.

- o since 2000 AISLeC has been running a postgraduate wound healing course under the auspices of the Università degli Studi "Bicocca" (University "Bicocca") in Monza (Milan) and the Università degli Studi "La Sapienza" (University "La Sapienza") in Rome. AISLeC also cooperates with other postgraduate wound healing courses such as the ones in Naples, Modena, Florence, and Genoa.
- o each year the Association hold its own national wound care conference. At the last event which took place in 2008, "Evidence Based Practices & Wound Care: New Frontiers", we had 700 participants including doctors, nurses, podiatrists, nutritionists and other healthcare professionals.
- o organising one-day workshops covering specific topics in-depth: e.g. nurse responsibility in wound care, wound infection, etc.
- o translating original documents (such as clinical guidelines etc) into Italian in order to facilitate dissemination of information/knowledge and to promote evidence based practice
- o the publication of AISLeC UpDate, a monthly newsletter, which provides synthesised information about wound care
- o in 2006 the AISLeC website was completely renewed; it can be accessed via [www.aislec.it](http://www.aislec.it) The website is a very active site with information, resources, and links. It allows members and non-members to keep in touch with the activities of the association and to update on wound management issues through AISLeC Library; it receives over 15.000 hits per month

- **RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

- o identifying research funding sources
- o facilitating and developing researches that will enhance the quality of wound management strategies (these have been recognized as authoritative sources of evidences; in one case, they were selected within a review by the Cochrane Collaboration)

- **RECENT ACTIVITIES**

- o Stakeholder in the development of EPUAP guidelines
- o Consensus Panel Recommendations on silver-based dressing for infected or critically colonized wounds

**WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO**

AISLeC is recognized among professionals and institutions as a scientific society committed to promote evidence and best practice in wound management. As we move through the 21st century, AISLeC will continue to bridge the gap between research, education and clinical practice in the primary and secondary care settings, emphasising the importance of patient-focused and collaborative approach.