

GAIF is one of the two Portuguese wound care groups. It was founded in 2002 and is based in Pampilhosa da Serra. At present we have more than 1000 associates. The main activities are research and dissemination of knowledge through conferences and workshops, as well as organization of thematic courses for specific health care groups.

GAIF has an established protocol with a nursing journal for a release every 3 months of a wound care supplement with the publication of original articles from researchers from either GAIF or its partners. Additionally, GAIF has its own site, www.gaif.net, where all the articles are published as well as all the validated tools are available for download. In the 7 years of its existence, GAIF has been able to validate, in partnership with CEIS-UC (Center for Research in Healthcare of the University of Coimbra), the PUSH-Portuguese version, PSST-Portuguese version, CWIS-Portuguese version, Implementation of Braden Scale on a National Level (in a partnership with the Portuguese Institute for Health Quality), along with other ongoing projects or those awaiting publication.

These studies include the characterization of diabetic foot ulcer in the Portuguese diabetic population, in partnership with the CEIS-UC. This prevalence study included more than 300 patients from all over Portugal, with data collected by volunteers. Another study, with the same partnership, focused on reimbursement of wound care materials. A self administered questionnaire was distributed to healthcare professionals with a return from more than 2000 respondents. In phase two, now under way, we hope to obtain the opinion from 5000 patients or relatives of patients with a wound, on the subject of reimbursement.

We are currently validating the SNAQ and MUST tools for the Portuguese population and in January we will start the validation of the Vancouver scar scale.

Every year, we hold two major events: the Annual Congress and the Wound Management Summer School.

The Congress is usually held in May and attended by 1200-1300 healthcare professionals. National and international reference speakers are invited and we believe that our congress is becoming a reference in the European context.

The Summer Wound School, has a participation limited to 30 healthcare professionals, selected on the basis of their curricula. It is held for 4 days in a hotel in full time attendance with theory and practice classes during the daytime and extra curricular activities in the evenings. This has been the source of solid links between participants that have been useful in their wound care activities in day to day practice.

The wound management system in Portugal is disorganized, the centralized purchasing system of the National Health Service is not evidence-based. There is no information on best practice and outcomes. Patients frequently have to purchase products they need without reimbursement. The same applies to products for prevention.

The Directorate of Health has established as priorities for 2008 pressure ulcers, leg ulcers in 2009 and diabetic foot ulcers in 2010. However, until now, not much progress has been achieved.

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