



EWMA Educational Development Programme

Curriculum Development Project

**Education Module:**

**Assessment and Management of Skin Tears**

First version: May 2017

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Written by Dawn Christensen

Edited by Samantha Holloway

On behalf of the International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP)\*

\* Kimberly LeBlanc, Dimitri Beeckman, Karen Campbell, Dawn Christensen, Ann Marie Dunk, Karen Edwards, Mary Gloeckner, Cathy Harley, Heidi Hevia, Samantha Holloway, Trish Idensohn, Diane Langemo, Hiromi Sanada, Vera Santos, Gulnaz Tariq, Ann Williams, Kevin Woo.



## **ABOUT THE EWMA EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The Programme is designed to assist students and healthcare professionals who work with patients with wounds and related skin conditions and wish to develop and/or increase their knowledge and skills in order to meet patient needs.

Overall, the Programme aims to:

- Provide students and healthcare professionals with the knowledge and skills to equip them to perform their role in the delivery of optimal wound care.
- Provide contemporary, interdisciplinary, product/brand neutral wound management education that is endorsed by EWMA.
- Provide quality standards against which other organisations can evaluate existing wound management programmes.
- Achieve European acceptance by developing an educational framework that is in line with European Commission educational initiatives in order to disseminate best practice in wound care.

## **ABOUT THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

The Curriculum Development Project is at the heart of the Educational Development Programme. The aim of the Project is to develop a flexible curriculum, consisting of a number of modules. All modules are based on a standard template but individually focused on a specific aspect of wound management. Each module is developed by a small group consisting of members of the EWMA Education Committee and/or affiliated wound care key specialists. For an updated list of the currently available modules please visit the education sub page at [www.ewma.org](http://www.ewma.org).

## **ABOUT THIS MODULE**

The Assessment and Management of Skin Tears module aims to:

- Broaden participant's knowledge and understanding of the prevention and management of skin tears
- Assist in the understanding of the risk factors for skin tears
- Enable the participants to identify and categorize/type skin tears to aid in consistent documentation of skin tears

## **MODULE CONTENT**

### **1. Elaborating Body**

European Wound Management Association (EWMA)



## **2. Date of production of module**

May 2017

## **3. Latest review date**

## **4. Module intended learning outcomes**

This module provides opportunities for health professionals to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas:

### **A. Intellectual Skills – Knowledge and Understanding**

Participants will have knowledge of the:

1. Definition of a skin tear
2. Anatomy and function of the skin and associated structures
3. Risk factors for the development of skin tears
4. Epidemiology of skin tears and its impact on health service provision
5. Prevention of skin tears
6. Pathophysiology of acute wound repair
7. Assessment and documentation of skin tears including types of skin tears
8. Treatment of skin tears, including product selection for skin tears

### **B. Practical Skills – Skills and attributes:**

Participants will be able to:

1. Recognise the risk factors predisposing individuals to skin tears
2. Develop, implement and evaluate a successful skin tear prevention program
3. Utilise a skin tear classification system to assess a patient with a skin tear
4. Make effective treatment decisions re care of the individual with a skin tear
5. Demonstrate awareness of appropriate topical management of skin tears
6. Monitor and evaluate treatment outcomes
7. Identify and manage the psychosocial impact of skin tears

## **5. Teaching/learning methods & strategies**

Acquisition of 4.A & 4.B (see above) is through a combination of lectures, small group workshops and learning in practice throughout the module. There is also the possibility of using e-learning in combination with traditional learning methods. Throughout, the learner is encouraged to undertake independent study both to supplement and consolidate what is being taught and to broaden knowledge and understanding of the subject.



## **6. Assessment methods**

Assessment methods will need to vary for each professional group. Understanding will be assessed in a variety of ways i.e. open discussion, formal written exercises, case studies, practice work-books. Throughout, the learner is expected to consolidate the development of practical skills / management skills in the clinical setting.

## **7. Unit content**

### **A. Overview/Epidemiology**

Prevalence and incidence of skin tears in community, Long Term Care, and Acute Care settings.  
National/International guidelines and targets

### **B. Anatomy**

The structure and function of the skin

### **C. Pathophysiology**

Changes to skin during the aging process

Differences between newborn, elderly, acutely ill and healthy skin

### **D. Principles of patient care assessment**

Assessment – physical, psychological, social

Identification of patient-centered management objectives

Care planning

Evaluation of outcomes

Use of evidence based practice/clinical guidelines

Referral criteria

Interdisciplinary team working

### **E. Assessment**

Initial patient assessment process

Assessment of quality of life

Assessing skin changes

Pain assessment

Wound assessment

Risk assessment

### **F. Risk factors**



Identification of risk factors for skin tears, including:

- Mobility related issues
- Altered sensory status/visual and auditory impairment, neuropathy
- Cognitive impairment
- Vulnerable skin
- History of previous skin tears
- Dependency for Activities of Daily Living
- Altered mobility
- History or risk of falls
- Skin concerns: dry/fragile skin, ecchymosis, skin diseases
- Nutritional status
- Medication and polypharmacy
- Exposure to mechanical trauma

**G. Prevention**

Knowledge of the most important preventive measures, e.g.:

- Implementation of a comprehensive skin tear reduction program
- Development and implementation of a protocol for the prevention of skin tears
- Daily skin assessment and monitoring for skin tears.
- Skin hygiene
- Safe patient handling techniques and equipment.
- Safe patient environment.
- Educating individual and caregivers on safety concerns regarding individual impairment and risk for skin tears.
- Fall precaution programmes to reduce risk of falls and blunt trauma.
- Avoidance of adhesive products on fragile skin.
- Optimisation of nutrition and hydration by consultation of dietician.
- Effects of medication and polypharmacy
- Multi-disciplinary team work



## **Practical skills**

### **A. Management of Skin tears**

Patient and wound assessment skills

Knowledge of classification systems for skin tears and the ability to appropriately classify skin tears in three categories

Understanding of which dressing to utilize to maximizing healing of skin tears

### **B. Psychosocial aspects of care**

Recognising and taking measures to reduce the psychosocial impact of skin tear related complaints on the individual, their carers and society including quality of life issues

Discussion of the complaints and concerns with the patients where appropriate

Effective patient education strategies

### **C. Education**

Education of patient and family, how to prevent skin tears

Education of primary/secondary care teams how to prevent and manage skin tears when they do occur

### **D. Documentation**

Methods of documentation, wound databases, wound/patient assessment tools, care planning

## **8. Unit specific learning resources**

### **Publications:**

1. Holloway, S., LeBlanc K. (2017). Dealing with Skin Tears. *Journal of Nursing in Practice* 22.64-66. 1.
2. LeBlanc, K., Baranoski, S. (2017). Skin Tears: Finally Recognized. *Advances in Skin & Wound Care*. 30(2). 62-63.
3. LeBlanc, K., Woo, K., Christensen, D., Forest-Lalonde, L., O’Dea, J., Varga, M., van Ineveld, C., McSwiggan, J. Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for the Prediction, Prevention, Assessment and Management of Skin Tears Across the Health Care Continuum. *Wounds Canada*. February 2017.
4. Baranoski, S., LeBlanc, K., Gloeckner, M. (2016). Preventing, Assessing and Managing Skin Tears: A Clinical Review. *American Journal of Nursing*. 116(11). 24-30.
5. LeBlanc, K, Alam, T., Langemo, D., Baranoski, S, Campbell, K., Woo, K. (2016) Clinical Challenges of Differentiating Skin Tears from Pressure Ulcers. *EWMA Journal*. 16(1) 17-23.
6. LeBlanc, K., Kozell, K., Martins, L., Forest-Lalonde, L., Langlois, M., Hill, M. (2016) Evidence Based Report Card: Is daily skin moisturizing more effective than no regular moisturizing routine in the prevention of skin tears in the elderly population? *JWOCN*. January/February 43 (1), 17-22.
7. LeBlanc, K, Baranoski, S, Christensen, D., Langemo, D., Edwards, K., Holloway, S., Gloeckner, M., Williams, A., Woo, K., Campbell, K., Regan, M. (2016) The Art of dressing Selection: A Consensus Statement on Skin Tears and Best Practice. *Advances in Skin & Wound Care* 29(1) 32-46.
9. Skiveren, J., Bermark, S., LeBlanc, K., Baranoski, S. (2015) Danish Translation and



- Validation of the International Skin Tear Advisory Panel Skin Tear Classification System. *International Journal of Wound Care*. 24(8).
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  12. LeBlanc, K.; Baranoski, S. Skin tears: Best Practice for care and prevention. *Nursing* 2014. 44(5): 46-48.
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  14. LeBlanc, K., Christensen, D., Cook, J., Culhane, B. (2013) Pilot Study of the Prevalence of Skin Tears in a Long Term Care Facility in Eastern Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Wound Ostomy and Continence Nursing*. 40(6). 580-584.
  15. LeBlanc, K, Baranoski, S, Christensen, D., Langemo, D., Sammon, M., Edwards, K., Holloway, S., Gloeckner, M., Williams, A., Sibbald, G., Campbell, K., Regan, M. (2013) International Skin Tear Advisory Panel: Putting it all together, a Tool Kit to aid in the Prevention, Assessment and Treatment of Skin Tears. *Advances in Skin & Wound Care* 26(10) 459-476
  16. LeBlanc, K.; Baranoski, S.; Christensen, D.; Langemo, D.; Sammon, M.; Edwards, K.; Holloway, S.; Gloeckner, M.; Williams, A.; Sibbald, G.; Campbell, K.; Regan, M. (2013) International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP) – Validation of a New Classification System for Skin Tears. *Advances in Skin & Wound Care*. 26(6) 263-265.
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**Online Resources:**

The All Wales Guidance for the Prevention and Management of Skin Tears

Published by: Wounds UK, London. Web: [www.wounds-uk.com](http://www.wounds-uk.com)