Information on the Italian Nurses Cutaneous Wounds Association

Since the Nursing Association for the Study of Skin Wounds (A.I.S.Le.C) was founded, in 1993, it has set its objectives on promoting the quality of assistance through extensive research and up-to-date scientific referrals. In 1998 the Association became interdisciplinary.

AISLeC has trained over 10,000 health professionals and conducted four multi-centre studies involving many thousands of colleagues and patients from 330 wards. These studies have enabled AISLeC to inform the Italian people and the Italian Health Ministry about this important problem and to improve quality assurance.

In Italy in 1984, 8.6% of patients in hospital had pressure sore lesions. This caused their hospital stay to increase by 69 days and it also increased the cost by seven million liras per lesion. The total cost of the medical care was more than 5000 billion lira or 2500 million euro. AISLeC research has demonstrated that, by 1994, 50% more patients in hospital had pressure sores than in 1984; this represents a rise from 8.6% in 1984 to 13.2% in 1994. The study, conducted in 1996, showed the presence of pressure sore lesions to be 18.3% for those in the hospital setting and 32.19% for those in the home care environment. The studies that we made in 1999 and 2001 confirmed the presence of chronic wounds in over 40% of patients in home care. The research in 2001 involved wards in home care and in geriatric clinics. We analysed over 3600 patients in 86 districts and geriatric wards. In home care we experienced over 34% with pressure ulcer, 25% with leg ulcer and 10% with diabetic foot.

When we consider other skin lesions, the situation in Italy is surely not any better. We know from the literature on this topic that, in Europe, vascular lesions afflict 1% of the adult population. Among those less than 40 years old the percentage is low, but it increases with age, reaching its peak among those in the age group 70 to 90 years with a female to male ratio of 3:1. These figures are not comparable to those found in Italy, thereby demonstrating that, in the last 10 years, there has not been an adequate health care program in place in Italy. This is even more dramatic if one considers that the situation in Italy in this area is already well known across Europe.

Current Achievements

- Over 200 seminars and meetings covering the entire national territory including Sicily and Sardinia have been conducted, and, over 10,000 nurses and even more doctors will be following our courses.
- 200 colleges offer a university degree and specialist courses in wound-care. The national epidemiological data on PS has been extended on a national level through national media to the entire population see Panorama (24-3-95, page 147), Corriere Salute (22-01-96, page 10), Repubblica Salute, (6-5-99) and Sole 24 Ore Sanità (27-04-99). This is the first time that nurses in Italy have been involved in a national health audit. These studies have enabled us to inform the Italian Health Ministry about this important problem and to improve quality assurance.
- The Italian Health Ministry included the problem of chronic wounds in the Italian Health plan of 2001.
- We have won prizes for the research in the poster category at the EWMA conference held in Milan the end of April ‘97 and in the Congress promoted by the Italian Society of Quality Assurance in Rome in May ‘97.
- The first AISLeC brochure will be produced for customers and distributed in pharmacies and hospitals - over 30,000 copies will be distributed.
- We have translated all AHCPR documents and distribute over 10,000 copies of these to our colleagues.
- The AISLeC web site has been successfully established and can be accessed at www.aislec.it
- We collaborate with EWMA to distribute over 700 copies of the EWMA Journal in Italy.
- We are collaborating with WUWHS in the next world meeting on wound-management.
- We are making progress with the first network of ambulatory services on wound-management to create a database on chronic wounds to help research and evaluate the study in this field.

Andrea Bellingeri  
President

AISLeC is this year co-operating with EWMA to arrange the 2003 EWMA meeting in Pisa.