The Belgian Federation of Woundcare (BEFEWO) was established in 2004 as the umbrella organisation of two major wound management associations in Belgium. Belgium is a bilingual country where both French and Flemish (Dutch) are spoken. The two wound management associations existing at that time were CNC Wound Management Association and AFISeP. An outcome of this joint partnership was the Belgian National Bilingual wound management conference in 2006 in Brussels. The success of this initiative has now resulted in an annual BEFEWO conference with over 450 participants each year. In 2011 the BEFEWO conference will be held during the EWMA conference at the SQUARE in Brussels. It is a great privilege in 2011 for BEFEWO to host EWMA’s conference in Brussels, the European Capital, as it is also the fifth anniversary of the Belgian Bilingual National Conference.

The organisations not only collaborate with conferences but also in relation to liaising with the Belgian Government. Here the organisations undertake common initiatives and represent each other as BEFEWO members in diverse international organisations as EWMA, ECET, EPUAP and ETRS. BEFEWO is a joint organisation representing the strength, multilingualism and unity of Belgium and its wound management associations. Besides the interest in wound management both organisations have a specific interest in ostomy care which is closely combined with wound management in Belgium.

CNC Wound Management Association (CNC WMA)

Fifteen years ago CNC WMA was established as a charity. The founding members of CNC WMA were Jan Vandeputte and Luc Gryson, both masters in Nursing Sciences and still active in wound management. Today CNC WMA has a board of managers, a council and an executive to fulfil all activities now delivered by CNC WMA. CNC WMA started as a very small specialised wound care nurses’ association but gradually healthcare professionals of different specialities also became interested in membership. Nowadays the healthcare professionals offer a valuable contribution in the society’s activities and nurses of all specialities with an interest in wound management are becoming members.

The main purpose of CNC WMA is to promote education in wound care among doctors, nurses and other health care professionals. To this end, CNC WMA has a strong and firm collaboration with several University colleges making it possible to organise more than six basic wound management courses and two postgraduate courses for nurses each year. As a result of this CNC WMA has contributed to the education of over 3,000 nurses in modern wound care. In addition, CNC WMA, together with partners, offers over 25 different educational specialised programs in wound management for nurses and doctors in Flanders. Since 1999 CNC WMA, together with The HUB University College of Brussels, has organised the post graduate course in wound management. In 2004 the same collaboration was set up with the KATHO University College. Another joint activity with HUB University College Brussels will be the master class being launched in
April 2011. This is a new initiative on which there hopefully will be a lot of focus in the future.

Since 2000 an annual Flemish wound symposium has been organised and in 2008 the symposium became the Flemish Wound Management Conference. Held in Kortrijk with its mirror symposium in Hasselt –Genk the conference annually attracts over 700 doctors and nurses to attend.

Besides education and promotion of wound management, CNC WMA believes in collaboration between organisations to promote wound care issues. CNC WMA collaborates with NVKVV (Nationaal Verbond van Katholieke Vlaamse Verpleegkundigen) Flanders, a major Nurses organisation, regarding a joint membership at reduced annual fee opportunity; with VLAS, the Flemish ostomy organisation, regarding educational activities and also with a steering committee of 21 local wound management companies to establish better education and awareness towards wound-care in Belgium.

In 2001, CNC WMA started a preliminary UCM (University Conference Model) concept at the EWMA conference for its postgraduate students. Since then CNC WMA has been proud to be able to send students to the conference each year.

In 2011 the updated website, www.woundcare.be, will be launched which is a reference for Flemish students and nurses seeking comprehensive and accessible information concerning wound management. Together with the paper version wondzorg.be this is the major reference source for the Flemish nurses and doctors.

Nearly twenty years ago an association named ARIAS was established. This association handled the distribution of information regarding ostomised patients to nurses and attending doctors etc. for the more professional treatment of ostomised patients.

Five years later ABISCEP was established with the intention to train stoma therapy nurses in Belgium. Over time, this association expanded into wound care and healing.

In 2007, these two francophone associations joined together under one name: AFISCeP.be.

This association is very active. It organizes an annual conference and roundtable meeting. In addition, some members are responsible for informing home care providers and future nurses in schools. It participates in the INAMI (Institut National Assurance Maladie Invalidité – National Institute for Disability Health Insurance) work group and defends patients for the reimbursement of equipment used in stoma care. The association works for the recognition of stoma therapy nurses and nurses specializing in wound care. In addition, AFISCeP.be also organises supplementary training events for certified stoma therapy nurses.

An additional project was a 900 hour stoma therapy and wound care training course that was organised to meet the Belgian legislation in the field. Our association works with CNC WMA to organise the BEFEWO conference which bring together the French and Flemish communities.

To support and complement its activities the AFISCeP.be publishes a quality journal twice a year that is respected and valued by all professionals. Its website, www.afiscep.be, also keeps members up-to-date on the latest news in the field. These projects all contribute to the dissemination of information and training to maintain a high skill level of caregivers in patient support and care.