We believe that these kinds of activities promote an easy and accessible way of obtaining up-to-date information. Most of the speakers are Portuguese, which is a way of recognising and motivating national practitioners. In the coffee area, delegates have the opportunity to peruse products and talk to company representatives. G@if considers companies involved in tissue viability as part of the multi-professional team, albeit slightly peripheral. Our corporate members have contributed to elevating our level of knowledge through their expertise and support.

G@if is also promoting some activities in the research field:
- Validation of the Push Tool, Bates scale, Baby Braden scale and Cardiff scale.
- Project of implementation of the Braden Scale in ten hospitals across Portugal (financed with European funds). Pressure ulcers are a common problem in hospitals, and this study, over a three-year period, aims to examine the problem in more depth and try to give quality care in a resource-limited environment. This will be achieved, through the implementation of the Braden scale (validated in Portugal), development and implementation of guidelines and education. Every three months an audit will take place covering clinical practice, such as documentation of prevalence data, risk assessment and provision of specialist equipment. This aims to find out if the implementation and dissemination strategy for the guidelines has led to better care.

All these studies have taken place in collaboration with the Center of Studies and Research in Health (CEIS) and the Institute of Quality in Health (IQS).

Furthermore, G@if is aiming to publish a range of small textbooks covering different aspects of wound care management, as Portugal is lacking in national publications on wound management. By the end of 2004, the first textbook will be published.

At a European level G@if has attended several European events such as those promoted by EPUAP and EWMA. We appreciate EWMA’s support and look forward to developing projects together in order to help raise the profile of acute and chronic wounds.

We are conscious that changing professional behaviour is not easy, as an individual’s professional practice is influenced by numerous factors. Success needs time, but with the help of all, we will spend the necessary time in the development and implementation of strategies to understand the complex multifactorial issues that may impact on the care and progress of patients and develop day-to-day practice in wound care treatment.

What Is New in Wound Treatment in Czech Republic?

To keep it short and factual, let’s just mention that on one spring working day in Brno in April 2004 110 doctors and nurses attended our meeting. This shows how committed we are to wound care.

In the Czech Republic (and in other countries as well, as we found out), it is vital we raise awareness of chronic wound treatment within the healthcare professions and especially among GPs. To achieve this our effort goes two ways: education and insurance companies’ cooperation.

Education takes place in GP’s seminars organized by the Czech medical chamber. At these seminars we lecture on current wound treatment issues and best practice in wound care. In addition, we also lecture to students at the National Center for Non-Medical Majors in the Health Industry in Brno.

As for insurance company co-operation (and the largest and most important is general health insurance company-Vseobecná zdravotní pojišťovna), we actively participate in negotiations to standardize wound treatment classifications in the insurance registry that influences financial reimbursement for patients.

In November in Pardubice, we hosted an autumn symposium with international participation. It was a representative event that, due to its success, may become a regular event in the future. At the symposium, our guest speaker was Salla Seppänen who lectured on her experiences and views on wound treatment. Hearing and comparing experiences on an international level contributes much to our society as it helps us avoid some mistakes and learn new methods, technologies and experiences.

International conferences are interesting and useful for us, and we look forward to attending more congresses in the future.

And what are we trying to achieve in the future? We need to continue educating our members, and also doctors, nurses and other professionals in the health care industry in the best in wound care treatments. We also have an important role to play in document control of medical care and the standardization of treatments in our hospitals and clinics and in insurance companies negotiations. This role will be even more crucial now the Czech Republic has joined the EU. The future is looking bright and busy for our society.