The Finnish Wound Care Society was founded in 1995 to increase health professionals’ skills and knowledge in wound care. FWCS now has around 2000 individual and 30 corporate members. Compared to the Finnish population (5 million inhabitants) the number of members is high. The FWCS covers the whole of Finland and all professions in the field of health care are represented in the society.

The FWCS has three main activities:
1. Arranging education in wound care for professionals
2. Publishing “Haava” (Wound), the Society’s journal
3. Supporting development and research work in the field of wound care

The FWCS has organised network education in the management of leg ulcers and pressure ulcers. The network education is organised regionally to facilitate participation by as many professionals as possible. This year FWCS will arrange regional network education in the eastern and western parts of Finland. The theme this year is ‘risk assessment, prevention and management of pressure ulcers’. The education is free for FWCS members.

Every year the FWCS arranges the National Wound Care Conference. This year it was held in Helsinki in February and was attended by 500 delegates. The theme was “Etiology and Local Management of Wounds”. The programme included main sessions, plenary sessions, free papers, posters and exhibitions. The topics in main sessions were: Factors Affecting to Wound Healing; Growth Factors and Wound Healing; Dermatology and Leg Ulcers; Venous and Arterial Leg Ulcers; The Role of Tissue Viability Nurses in Vascular Outpatient Clinic; Sinus Pilonidalis – Etiology and Treatment; Debridement of Wound Bed, and Managing Traumatic Wounds in Outpatient Clinic.

The plenary sessions were focused on the practice of wound management. In one session participants discussed how to assess wounds and make the right decisions on local management of those wounds. The other session focused on nurses’ adherence to wound management procedures – which issues increase and decrease the nurses’ commitment to particular wound management procedures. In the sessions, the practice of wound management was presented through patient cases, which this year focused on the experiences of treating wounds with sugar. The national results of PE-PUS (Pan European Pressure Ulcer Study), and of the Development of a Pressure Ulcer Risk Assessment Scale in Finland were presented as free papers, and, in addition, for the first time, posters were presented at the national conference; though the number of posters was not high their quality was very good. The exhibition was also very good and gave participants a wealth of information on available wound management products, and ultrasound debridement of wounds, as well as the prevention of wounds by special mattresses and good nutrition.

The journal Haava is published quarterly and each issue features a special theme. This year the themes are Children and Wounds, Etiology and Local management of Wounds – this is the special issue for the National Wound Care Conference, Wound Patient and Pain and the seventh European Pressure Ulcer Conference in Tampere.

A major role for the FWCS is to promote professional skills and competence in wound care. In spring 2002, FWCS called a specialist work group to develop the criteria for registration of Tissue Viability Nurses (TVN) in Finland. The TVN accreditation work group has members from nursing administration, practice and education as well as from the Ministry of Social and Health Care, and the Ministry of Education. As yet a qualification for TVNs does not exist in Finland, but many hospitals have identified nurses who perform the role. However, as unregistered TVNs, their educational background, clinical experience and knowledge vary greatly. FWCS aims to establish and support an officially recognised qualification for TVNs. There has been some success in this and in autumn 2003, the first qualified TVNs will be working in Finland.

The FWCS gives grants for its members to promote their professional development and to support research work in wound care. This year grants will be given for the participation fee to the European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel Open Meeting on the 3-6th of September in Tampere, Finland. The theme is: ‘Pressure Ulcer Prevention and Management – have we made a difference?’

FWCS appreciates the international co-operation that is achieved and nurtured through organisations such as EWMA and EPUAP, and I hope to meet many international delegates from throughout Europe in Tampere.