In February this year, The Finnish Wound Care Society organized its fourteenth, national, two day congress on wound healing. The theme was: **Challenging and uncommon wounds**

The theme was selected according to suggestions from the field. Although these wounds are rare and more seldom diagnosed than wounds such as venous leg ulcers, they pose real challenges both for the patient and for the health care system. The theme was split into four main sessions.

The first session focused on malignant fungating wounds. We had a leading Finnish dermatopathologist to give an introductory lecture on the different manifestations of skin cancers and cancer metastasis to the skin. This was followed by the different treatments and finally there was a nurse-led lecture on the special wound care of these extremely hard-to-heal or non-healing wounds. Caring for a patient with a malignant fungating wound is a challenge for any nurse or doctor regardless of their years of experience in wound care. The wounds cause huge distress for the patient including pain, malodour, haemorrhage, excessive exudate and infection, altered body image and social isolation. Neglect may also play its role with patients with advanced malignant wounds. The patient and his family may fail to seek medical help even if the wound is clearly visible. The stories about the patients with malignant fungating wounds were listened to attentively by our audience. The informative lecture improved both their knowledge and clinical understanding of patients with malignant fungating wounds.

The second session focused on acute traumatic wounds, especially on wounds in fragile elderly skin or traumatic amputations. This lecture was very appropriate as, at the same time as our conference, the Fair Centre was also hosting a big motorcycle event and many of those traumatic amputations discussed seemed to have happened to motorcyclists!

The third session about pressure ulcers (PU) was held the next morning. This theme was chosen to cover the new EPUAP and NPUAP Guidelines. The session included the presentation of the new Guidelines which the Finnish Wound Care Society has had translated into Finnish to enable health-care professionals in Finland to fully understand them; no more excuses for not preventing PUs!

Our fourth session concentrated on various types of skin vasculitis, from the diagnosis to the treatment and to local wound care.

Along with the main sessions, we had organised practical workshops. The workshops focussed on five common wound care themes: debridement, ABI- measuring, compression therapy, how to choose a right wound care product and how to dress a difficult wound.

There were 96 participants at these workshops (fully booked). And the participants had a chance to learn “hands on” about the themes. Each workshop included about 20 minutes introduction and 20 minutes of practical experience. Organizing workshops requires strenuous efforts from our organizing committee and is not financially profitable, but we included them as they offer a very beneficial way of learning.

The venue was in the Helsinki Fair Centre, in the congress area. We have chosen this same venue for four years now, because it is very easy to get there from all over Finland. Also the personnel of the Fair Centre are very professional and have become almost “friends” to us which made the hard work of organizing such an event easier for us all.

On the first night of the congress we always have a ‘get together’ evening party which also takes place in the Fair Centre. The event is free of charge and has a free buffet for participants. This year’s theme was “TexMex” and featured not only a buffet of food chosen to go with the theme, but also some Tequila girls who danced and served tequila for those who wanted to enjoy tequila slammers; some participants had quite a headache the next morning!
The objective of the evening party is to make social contacts with other delegates and to meet friends. The company members can also attend, so it is also a good marketing possibility for them. The party has always been very successful and popular with the participants; this year we had there almost 300 partygoers!

Over all we had around 650 participants at this year’s congress. This was only about 100 fewer than the year before, so our fears about the theme were unnecessary. We had a marketing area of 280m$^2$ for wound care companies and 37 companies attended. We are very strict about what kinds of companies are allowed to participate; only those companies that are genuinely involved in wound care are welcomed. This is because we want to preserve our status as professionals. We also reward our lecturers well for presenting the lectures; that way we can ensure very high standard specialist lectures and we can be sure the knowledge is always up to date and evidence based.

In all, our congress was, once again, a very successful event: the lectures were brilliant and kept to schedule, the food was good, the exhibition looked very impressive and the feedback that we had was mainly positive. Next year is our 15th national congress. The planning and organizing has already started, the theme has been chosen and marketing has begun.

The congress will be built around the theme of acute wounds, so that it can serve as many healthcare professionals as possible. This theme was last presented six years ago and the event was the biggest success we’ve ever had. That time there were over 1100 participants and we are hoping to have the same amount of participants next year or even more; that will be a really huge challenge for us! However, with a good program, top lecturers and the good reputation that we have gained over the years, the challenge will not be an impossible one!

Since 2007, EWMA has successfully offered students of wound management from institutes of higher education across Europe the opportunity to take part of academic studies whilst participating in the EWMA Conference. In 2011 it is expected that students from the institutes listed below will participate in the EWMA UCM in Brussels.

The opportunity of participating in the EWMA UCM is available to all teaching institutions with wound management courses for health professionals.

EWMA strongly encourages teaching institutions and students from all countries to benefit from the possibilities of international networking and access to lectures by many of the most experienced wound management experts in the world.

Yours sincerely

Zena Moore,
Chair of the EWMA Education Committee, EWMA President

Participating institutions:

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<th>Institution</th>
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<td>Haute École de Santé</td>
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<td>Universidade Católica Portuguesa</td>
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For further information about the EWMA UCM, please visit the Education section of the EWMA website www.ewma.org or contact the EWMA Secretariat at ewma@ewma.org