

Implementation of a Leg Ulcer Strategy in Slovenia- Case identification

Marta Gantar¹, Helena Kristina Peric¹, Peter J Franks²

- 1- Slovenian Wound Management Association
- 2- European Wound Management Association

Introduction: Management of chronic leg ulceration represents a problematic challenge in Slovenia as well as in many other European countries due to different factors, such as organisational, educational and financial issues. Patients don't have an equal access to services and medical devices. There is clearly a lack of data which would enable us to assess adequately the effectiveness of wound management provided and to implement changes to improve current practices.

SWMA and EWMA decided to undertake project to produce evidence to improve leg ulcer management. The first part of the project, a prevalence study forms the basis of this presentation. Further steps include more detailed evaluation of provided treatments, development of more effective strategies and their implementation in practice.

Aim: the complete project aim is to develop a rational approach to the leg ulcer management that will be available to all patients with chronic leg ulceration and that will serve as a model to other countries. The aim of the first part of the study is to gather data on which we can base further evaluations and proposals for implementation.

Methods: Dolenjska region (southeast of Slovenia), with a population of 138.872 was selected as study site. Questionnaires were sent to all health care institutions managing leg ulcers (hospitals, health care centres, nursing homes, private clinics) and distributed to health care workers treating wounds in these institutions. Prior to the questionnaire distribution meetings were held in institutions to introduce the aim and the methods of the study.

Results: In total 309 patients were identified in the study, which represents prevalence rate 1.87/1,000 population. Two thirds of patients were women. The mean age was 72,5 years. Almost half of the diagnosis are made on clinical assessment alone. A wide variety of medical and nursing staff treat patients with chronic ulceration. Pain is an important issue for patients who suffer from the condition. The average number of visits was high in this patient group (3,82/week). More than 160 products were used for management of these ulcers.

Conclusion: More detailed data analysis from this study is still in progress (e.g. cost-effectiveness). Initial data suggests higher incidence of leg ulcerations compared to some other countries. There is a reliance on clinical diagnosis without the use of appropriate investigations in many patients. There is a clear need to develop guidelines on treatment including an appropriate product formulary.