New EWMA Document

Surgical Site Infections – Preventing and Managing Surgical Site Infections across Health Care Sectors

On behalf of the author group, we are pleased to introduce the new EWMA Document on surgical site infections, which will be published during the summer of 2019 in the Journal of Wound Care.

In the drafting of this publication, we have focussed on making the vast pool of published resources and guidelines available to readers in a more condensed and easily accessible format. Surgical site infections (SSI) are undeniably connected to the hospital setting, the patient, site of surgery and the surgical procedure itself. However, an often-overlooked aspect of SSI is its occurrence upon discharge from hospital to the home. This is why we have dedicated a special focus to the home care setting and the multidisciplinary approach needed to prevent SSI and secure treatment pathways outside the hospital setting.

Aims, objectives and scope of document

SSI is an unfortunate post-operative complication that affects many surgical patients worldwide, and the treatment of this type of wound is most likely to occur following discharge from an acute care setting. Whilst there are several guidelines for preventing and managing SSI in hospitals, there is an absence of guidelines for the optimum post-operative management in the home care setting. Furthermore, a set of recommendations on this topic covering primary and community health care professionals’ roles remains absent from clinical resources.

The overall aims of this document are to:

- Highlight present knowledge with regard to the prevention and management of SSI in the primary and community health care sectors.
- Present a set of recommendations to guide clinical practice in the community setting for maximum patient healing outcomes following surgery.

More specifically, the main objectives of the document are to:

- Map SSI incidence, prevalence and high-risk areas, based on published information and data available from SSI registries.
- Present the principles of management of surgical wounds and the available modern techniques for the prevention and treatment of SSI across sectors.
- Provide a summary of evidence-based best perioperative practice recommendation to prevent SSI.
Structure and content
This document is presented in 10 chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction to the document and describes the aim and objectives of the work. Chapter 2 presents the methodology and terminology used in the document. Chapter 3 describes the epidemiology of SSI, while Chapter 4 discusses principles of the management of surgical wounds. Chapter 5 presents a summary of best practices for the pre-, intra- and post-operative phases. Chapter 6 discusses principles of post-operative care, and Chapter 7 presents contemporary methods of wound assessment and discusses the diagnosis of infection. Chapter 8 reports on current treatments for the clinical management of SSI. Chapter 9 summarises the main conclusions of the document, with Chapter 10 providing a brief look at new developments and highlighting areas that require further research.

Author group

Kylie Sandy-Hodgetts, (co-editor), BSc MBA PhD, Senior Research Associate. Faculty of Medicine, School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Western Australia.

Mark Collier, RGN, ONC, RCNT, RNT, BA (Hons), Nurse Consultant and Associate Lecturer - Tissue Viability. Independent – formerly at the United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust, c/o Pilgrim Hospital, Sibsey Road, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 9QS

Claus Moser, MD, Clinical microbiologist. Rigshospitalet, Department of Clinical Microbiology, Copenhagen, Denmark

Karen Ousey, PhD, MA, PGDE, BA, RN, ONC, Professor of Skin Integrity. University of Huddersfield. Institute of Skin Integrity and Infection Prevention, Huddersfield, UK

Sebastian Probst, RN, DClinPrac, Professor of tissue viability and wound care. HES-SO University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland, School of Health Sciences, Geneva, Switzerland

Jennie Wilson, Professor of Healthcare Epidemiology. University of West London, College of Nursing, Midwifery and Healthcare, London, UK

Deborah Xuereb, RN, Senior Infection Prevention & Infection Control Nurse. Mater Dei Hospital, Msida, Malta

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