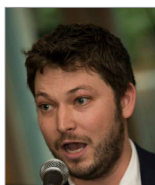


Rising to the global challenge of wound care



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The data are stark. The annual cost associated with treating and managing the wounds and comorbidities of 2.2mn patients within the NHS in the UK stood at £5.3bn in 2012/13, according to the Burden of Wounds study (Guest et al, 2015). On top of this, the prevalence of wounds has been estimated to be increasing at 11% per annum (Guest et al, 2017). By this measure, the total cost of treating an estimated 3.7mn patients with a wound in 2017/18 will come in at between £8-9bn. This is staggering. And the UK is by no means alone; in Europe, one challenging wound can cost between EUR6,650-EUR10,000, with the total cost of wounds accounting for 2-4% of healthcare budgets across the continent (Posnett et al, 2009); meanwhile, pressure ulcers cost the US healthcare system an estimated USD9.1-11.6bn per year (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2011). These are huge sums of money and the human cost, of course, is immeasurable.

If we can extrapolate that wound prevalence will rise in the double-digits across the globe, then it is safe to assume we are face to face with a gigantic and, terrifyingly, growing problem. So that is the depressing part, but what to do? It has been said many times before but it bears repeating — the promotion of research and the sharing of best practice are absolutely key to rising to this global challenge.

As I write this, it is just over 2 weeks since I attended my sixth Wounds UK Annual Conference in Harrogate — how time flies! Seeing so many delegates in one venue and an array of brilliant speakers as ever, it was inspiring to think of a new generation of healthcare professionals taking the things they'd learnt back to their respective hospitals or into the community. And aside from Wounds UK, this year has once again been jam packed with conferences dedicated to improving wound care, such as the European Wound Management Association in Amsterdam and Qatar International Wound Management Conference (both attended by some of my Omniaimed colleagues),

underlining the international community's commitment to disseminating research and best practice.

It is not just healthcare professionals that are instrumental in attacking the scourge of wounds head on — innovation in wound care technologies is a cause for great encouragement. Once proven cost-effective and effective, some of these will be game changers. Therefore, once again, the significance of up-to-date and continued education in a multidisciplinary environment cannot be underplayed.

So there are plenty of reasons for optimism as we head into 2018. The thirst for knowledge in the wound care world has never gone away and through a constant commitment to seeking out education, healthcare providers can remain ahead of the curve and certainly help to reverse the prevalence rates mentioned above. We at Wounds International are very proud of providing articles from renowned authors to such a dedicated and talented audience as yourselves. We will see you again in 2018!

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