

LYMPHOEDEMA STEPS INTO THE HEALTHCARE SPOTLIGHT

Christine Moffatt

We are delighted to welcome you to the first issue of the *Journal of Lymphoedema*.

The journal has been produced in partnership with the Lymphoedema Framework Project (LFP) and Wounds UK. The LFP is a UK-based research collaboration that involves lymphoedema specialists from the British Lymphology Society (BLS), organisations responsible for care delivery, researchers and patients from the Lymphoedema Support Network (LSN), and the compression and hosiery industry. The LFP was established to put lymphoedema care firmly on the healthcare agenda. Wounds UK is a healthcare communications company that is dedicated to providing affordable education to all healthcare professionals working in wound and lymphoedema management.

The launch of this publication comes at a time when specialists involved in lymphoedema management and patients with lymphoedema are fighting to increase awareness of, and dispel the myths surrounding, this distressing condition. While lymphoedema management is well-developed in many countries in mainland Europe and treatment is reimbursed, this is not the case in many places throughout the world. In many areas, lymphoedema is not considered a health priority despite the huge waste of resources associated with its poor management, and the considerable clinical and psychological morbidity associated with the condition. A lack of understanding of the nature of the condition has led to the

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misconception that lymphoedema arises only as complication of cancer treatment, when the fact is that half of all cases of lymphoedema are either primary in nature or secondary to other diseases that are unrelated to cancer.

The *Journal of Lymphoedema* aims to put lymphoedema care on the map, and help develop the clinical practice of all professionals involved in this area of care. The journal, published twice a year, is peer-reviewed throughout to ensure

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a consistent high editorial standard that reflects current clinical practice and issues surrounding lymphoedema care.

In this issue, we begin a series on diagnostic investigations with an excellent review of lymphoscintigraphy by Vaughan Keely. This article shows the complexity of this investigation and calls for an international standard of use and interpretation; a sentiment that is echoed throughout many of the articles. Neil Piller's refreshing review of the past five years of development in lymphoedema allows us to reflect on many aspects of established care. The debate within this edition, on the role of breathing in lymphoedema management, highlights just how different professional views on areas of established practice are and the need for further research to tease out the potential of this component of treatment.

Lymphoedema, secondary to breast cancer, remains a considerable health problem. Peter Franks, highlights how differences in methodology make comparisons between populations difficult to interpret.

The article on the history of the LSN shows how effective this patient organisation has been in raising political awareness and highlights the value of involving patients in developments in care. In this issue, one of its members gives a touching insight into the realities of living with the condition. Rebecca Billingham, Chair of the British Lymphology Society, also discusses a complex case that shows the difficulties patients face when given their diagnosis and the impact this may have on them and their families.

All lymphology societies are invited to include information about their work and forthcoming events within the journal's society update pages. There is much that can be learnt from the experience of others and we are eager to provide a platform for the sharing of information.

This launch journal also contains a valuable supplement, *The Template for Practice: Compression Hosiery in Lymphoedema*, which brings together the technical, scientific and practical issues concerning the effective use of compression hosiery.

We very much hope that this journal will be a useful resource and that it contributes to raising the profile of lymphoedema throughout the world. We are keen to receive feedback from you so that the journal really meets the needs of its readership and contributes to changing practice. **JL**