

IMPLEMENTATION OF A BEST PRACTICE ALGORITHM TO IMPROVE LEG ULCER HEALING RATES

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Leg ulcers are estimated to affect 1.5% of the UK adult population and 1 in every 170 were diagnosed with venous leg ulcers. The management of venous leg ulcers takes place predominantly in the community with district Nurses or Practice Nurses and this equates to the highest costs in wound care overall. At a cost of £1.9 billion to the NHS each year and low percentage of accurate diagnosis, delays in treatment and poor patient outcomes. A solution has to be identified and implemented. New campaign 'Legs Matter' has been developed to raise awareness to the public and healthcare providers. It is imperative that we adopt proven evidence based practice for earlier diagnosis and treatment pathways. In North Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust an initial audit of patients (in Oct' 2017) with leg ulceration active to District Nurse caseloads mirrored the national Burden of Wounds Guest study (2016). A change in practice was indicated. The Best Practice statement for venous leg ulcers was developed by clinicians to promote consistent best practice with clear treatment pathway; therefore this was adopted into NLAG community services. Evidence from research trial VenUS IV recommended hosiery kits as management for VLU this formed part of the treatment pathway locally. The inclusion of hosiery kits for treatment and wrap systems as first line choice was adopted. Giving a different choice to patients, involving them in self-care has proved very successful. In Jul' 2018, it was identified that 97% of leg ulcer community clinic patients were treated with hosiery kits or Leg Wrap system. This reduces the costs to the burden of wound care in the NHS and UK significantly, encourages self-care and improves quality of life.

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