COMMUNITY-BASED STUDY ON THE QUALITY OF CARE OF CHRONIC LEG ULCERS IN NORTH GERMANY –
INTRODUCTION OF A SCORING SYSTEM

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Aim: 1) Evaluation of the quality of care of leg ulcers in the area of Hamburg, North Germany, 2) assessment of
      treatment modalities with respect to guidelines, 3) recording of the patients’ quality of life and treatment burden in the
      community.

Methods: The criteria for the quality of care were derived from the German national (AWMF) guideline and on the
      international guidelines. A prioritized list of criteria was developed by means of a nationwide Delphi consensus among
      wound experts (physicians and nurses), including 20 indicators which define “optimal treatment” and are transformed to a
      score from 0-100. The study included a consecutive, representative sample of n=520 patients with chronic leg ulcers of
      any origin. Patients were approached in wound clinics, office-based practices, nursing homes, home care services and
      special ambulances for homeless persons and drug users, thus providing a large spectrum of 220 health care providers
      in total. All patients were interviewed, photographed and personally examined by trained wound experts. The patients
      were asked to fill a questionnaire addressing quality of life (QoL), experiences with prior therapy and quality of care.

Results: A total of 502 out of 520 patient records could by analyzed, including 63% venous, 23% mixed, 2% vasculitic
      and 12% other leg ulcers. Taken together, a high proportion of patients (78.6%) were treated with modern wound
      dressings. Also pain and compression therapy mostly accorded to guidelines. However, there were deficits in diagnostics
      (e.g. angiology, biopsies, pain measurement) and in the concomitant wound treatments. A high proportion of patients still
      suffered from marked reductions of QoL. The average quality score was below 60.

Conclusions: In spite of mostly "lege artis” topical treatment, many patients in North Germany are not treated
      satisfyingly according to guidelines. The “quality score” developed by the Delphi panel proved to be helpful for quality
      evaluation.