ANALYSIS OF A LEG ULCER STRATEGY IN POLAND- CASE IDENTIFICATION

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Introduction: The management of chronic leg ulceration represents a problematic challenge in Poland as well as in many other European countries due to different factors, such as organisational, educational and financial issues. Patients don’t have an equal access to services and medical devices. There is clearly a lack of data which would enable us to assess adequately the effectiveness of wound management provided and to implement changes to improve current practices.

EWMA decided to undertake project to produce evidence to improve leg ulcer management. The first part of the project, a prevalence study forms the basis of this presentation. Further steps include more detailed evaluation of provided treatments, development of more effective strategies and their implementation in practice.

Aim: the complete project aim is to develop a rational approach to the leg ulcer management that will be available to all patients with chronic leg ulceration and that will serve as a model to other countries. The aim of the first part of the study is to gather data on which we can base further evaluations and proposals for implementation.

Methods: Opole city and Strzelce Opolskie district (southwest of Poland), with a population of 212,000 was selected as study site. Questionnaires were sent to all health care institutions managing leg ulcers (hospitals, health care centres, general practitioners, dermatological practices, private clinics, hospices) and distributed to health care workers treating wounds in these institutions. Prior to the questionnaire distribution meetings were held in institutions to introduce the aim and the methods of the study.

Results: In total 327 patients were identified in the study, which represents a prevalence rate of 1.54/1,000 population. About 65% patients were women. The mean age was 66 years. Most of the diagnoses were made by general practitioners. A wide variety of medical and nursing staff treat patients with chronic ulceration. Pain is an important issue for patients who suffer from the condition. The commonest ulcer was venous ulcer (about 70%), but Doppler was used only in about 10% of diagnoses. More then 20 products were used for management of these ulcers, but gauze dressings without compression were used in two thirds of patients.

Conclusion: More detailed data analysis from this study is still in progress. Initial data suggests similar prevalence of leg ulceration compared to some other countries. In most of the cases the clinical examination was the only used method. There is a clear need to develop guidelines on treatment including an appropriate product formulary.