

From ‘it’s just a skin tear’ to a global awareness campaign: How the ISTAP–EWMA collaboration led to the first special issue of JOWM

All too often, we hear health care providers say, ‘It’s just a skin tear’ and ‘That’s part of it’, or ‘Everyone has a skin tear now and then, there’s little you can do’. In fact, the opposite is true; skin tears are painful, acute wounds that can develop into chronic wounds, yet they are largely avoidable with appropriate (and often simple) preventive measures. Therefore, there is a need to reverse this defeatist view of skin tears in order to move the default negative position to a more positive view that everyone has the right not to have a skin tear.

The International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP) is a growing organisation focused on the prediction, assessment, prevention and treatment of skin tears, and therefore the skin health of the most vulnerable people in our global society. ISTAP have been working to raise awareness of this problem for more than 10 years. ISTAP’s unique international organisational model, with strong and diverse regional representation, contributes to its success. ISTAP publishes a wide range of scientific evidence, for example, in the form of guidelines, consensus papers and research articles. ISTAP has also developed and studied its own classification tool for skin tears. The result is the most comprehensively tested classification of skin tears in the world. That skin tears are also receiving attention in the scientific literature is demonstrated by the 1,274 articles on the topic published between 2012 and 2022 (including 57 clinical trials).

It is our great pleasure to lead the very first special issue of the Journal of Wound Management (JOWM, official journal of the European Wound Management Association – EWMA) on the topic of skin tears. EWMA and ISTAP launched this collaboration in 2020 with the goal of raising awareness about skin tears. As part of this campaign, two interdisciplinary webinars were organised, and this special issue was developed. This special issue of the JOWM includes a collection of nine articles on skin tears that will, undoubtedly, be of great interest to the international readership. In this issue, you can expect an excellent case study by Varga and colleagues on how to engage a person with a skin tear on the lower leg in the wound-healing process. In a clinical study, Hill and Smith compare a liquid cyanoacrylate skin protectant with skin closure strips in the treatment of Type I skin tears in elderly patients. An extremely interesting epidemiologic perspective is offered by Fraser et

al. in their analysis of real-world data from North American nursing facility skin and wound records on the prevalence, healing and treatment of skin tears. Insights into implementation are provided by Bell, in her report on the development of evidence-based practices to guide the creation of a protocol for the treatment of skin tears. In another study, Charbonneau and her colleagues examine knowledge as a driver for implementation in a survey of nurses in French-speaking Switzerland. In two other manuscripts, Deprez and colleagues describe clinical guidelines for the treatment of skin tears from a home care perspective, and Van Tiggelen and colleagues provide us with updated knowledge about skin tears for the year 2022. Formosa and Holloway present the results of a survey to determine nurses' knowledge of skin tears based on the OASES tool, and Jansz and colleagues present an evaluation of a first responder skin tear wound management pack.

We would like to thank all of the authors who contributed to the success of this special issue and the readership of JOWM by advancing risk assessment, prevention and treatment in the field of skin tears.

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