

EDITORIAL

Tackling the problem of chronic wounds – focus on diabetic foot ulcers

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We write this editorial during the Wounds Australia National Wound Awareness Week 2023 which has the theme ‘Let’s get wound care RIGHT – with the RIGHT diagnosis and the RIGHT treatment at the RIGHT time’. Additionally, reflecting on the recent Australian Government announcement for development and implementation of the first ever Chronic Wound Consumables Scheme, it seems highly fitting to focus this journal edition on the problem of chronic wounds and, more specifically, diabetic foot ulcers.

Chronic wound care is estimated to cost the Australian health and aged care system nearly \$6.6bn with each patient spending on average \$4000 on out-of-pocket costs for consumables each year. In addition to the high cost of wound care, patients who develop diabetic foot ulcer complications including wound infection, gangrene, neuropathy and amputations often lead to high mortality rates at five years. This highlights the need for better support of patients with diabetic foot ulcers, better assessment, management and prevention of chronic ulcers by wound care practitioners and urgent need for novel tools and therapies for better clinical wound management of diabetic foot ulcers with the right treatment at the right time.

In this issue of Wound Practice and Research we present a diverse range of topics addressing the above-mentioned challenges. Nube et al explore an array of challenges faced by people living with diabetes-related foot ulcers in attending the hospital-based high-risk group foot service; while Obilior

et al describe the development of a social media-based self-management programme for prevention of diabetes related foot ulceration in persons with diabetes. Understanding these challenges faced by patients and implementing novel approaches in clinical management of diabetic foot ulcers will lead to better patient outcomes.

Following on the same theme, we hope you enjoy reading a comprehensive scoping review by Dr Bui and colleagues which reflects on current clinical assessment, management and prevention of chronic wounds in the Australian context, which we know will be a highlight for much of our readership. Lastly, Whiteley et al present an interesting case study introducing a novel hydrofiber dressing containing both ionic silver and antibiofilm solution to manage biofilms and aid in healing of chronic wounds while Prof Emily Haesler presents a WHAM evidence summary on the use of topical oxygen therapy for treatment of diabetic foot ulcers.

We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate winners and best runners-up for The Wounds Australia Literary Awards 2023. On behalf of the Editorial Board we congratulate them on the fantastic achievement and thank them for their high-quality submissions to the journal. Please see the list of awardees on page 119.

We hope you enjoy this latest issue of Wound Practice and Research and we look forward to receiving your submissions for future issues.

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Reference.

Burnett J, Kerr A, Morrison M, Ruston A. An audit to assess the impact of prescribing a monofilament fibre debridement pad for patients with unhealed wounds after six months. J Wound Care. 2021 May 2;30(5):381–388

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