

# Effective management of dependency oedema using compression\* with an immobile patient

Lesley Robinson - Vascular Nurse Practitioner, North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust

## *Aim*

To highlight the importance of a holistic approach for dependency oedema and associated ulceration, as demonstrated by the case of Ms P.

## ***Method***

Ms P (46) was referred with gross left leg oedema affecting the gaiter and foot. A colonised wound was present to the dorsum. A compression bandage kit had previously been applied with no wound improvement and exacerbation of oedema. Toe oedema had not been addressed.

## ***History***

- Spina Bifida
- Wheelchair-dependant
- Right leg amputation (2012) due to oedema, non-healing ulceration and recurrent cellulitis

## ***The new care plan following assessment:***

- Silver dressings to control bio-burden
- Alternative inelastic cohesive compression bandaging\*, incorporating toe bandaging
- Passive exercises using a scarf looped around the foot
- Modified manual lymphatic drainage with attention to the foot

## Results



5/11/14

Wound measuring 4.5 x 4 cm

Dirty wound base, surrounding skin excoriated



10/12/14

Wound measuring 3.5cm x 4cm oedema in foot reducing, fibrosis softening, ulcer base cleaner, but still sloughy, surrounding skin condition improving, epithelialising proximally

## **Results** *(continued)*



30/3/15

Wound measuring 1.5.x 1 cm,  
continued oedema reduction



1/6/15

Wound healed. Custom made stocking fitted,  
with instructions for continued foot massage.

## ***Discussion***

The incidence of lymphoedema in spina bifida patients is 100 times higher than the general population (*Garcia & Dicianno 2011*). Therefore, appropriate intervention is paramount. Selection of inappropriate compression can exacerbate oedema, in turn preventing wound healing.

Passive exercise encourages inelastic bandage pressure peaks, encouraging venous and lymphatic flow (*Partsch & Junger 2012*).

## ***Conclusion***

A holistic plan of care has facilitated oedema reduction and wound healing reducing the risk of morbidity, the need for amputation and improving quality of life.

\* Actico inelastic cohesive compression bandage by Activa Healthcare