Optimising wellbeing in people living with a wound

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Why is wellbeing important?

• **Living with a wound** can impact on existing lifestyles, priorities and behaviours\(^1\)
• **Psychosocial factors** are associated with delayed healing\(^2-4\)
• **Poor symptom management** may cause non-concordance\(^5-7\)
• Where individuals are involved in their care and have **greater control, outcomes improve**\(^8\)

Improving health and wellbeing is increasingly thought to be linked to economic and social benefits\(^9\)
Optimising wellbeing in people living with a wound

New international consensus to highlight human cost of living with a wound and the role of clinicians, industry and organisations in optimising patient wellbeing¹
Development of the consensus

- **Round table** meeting in South Africa – paper publication highlighting key issues\(^1\)
- **Consensus meeting** in Brussels with key experts from medical, nursing, allied health professions and research
- **Workshop** with two service users groups
- **Text review** process involving international experts to reflect practice across different geographies, culminating in consensus document\(^1\)
How does living with a wound affect wellbeing?¹

BOX 1 Wellbeing in relation to wound management

Wellbeing is a dynamic matrix of factors, including physical, social, psychological and spiritual. The concept of wellbeing is inherently individual, will vary over time, is influenced by culture and context, and is independent of wound type, duration or care setting. Within wound healing, optimising an individual's wellbeing will be the result of collaboration and interactions between clinicians, patients, their families and carers, the healthcare system and industry. The ultimate goals are to optimise wellbeing, improve or heal the wound, alleviate/manage symptoms and ensure all parties are fully engaged in this process.

What people want is control over their situation. Self-management and shared decision making are key outcomes of empowerment¹¹
Factors that affect wellbeing

- Physical
- Mental
- Social
- Cultural

Photographs courtesy of Wounds International
How do individual wounds affect wellbeing?

“It is very easy to get depressed and isolated.”

“As soon as the skin becomes red or broken it can be very frightening. Life stops.”

“It (the wound) can take over your life. From not understanding it as a young man, to not being able to swim or socialise. You can't wear shorts in the summer. It's lots of little things like not being able to see friends, go swimming or run around the garden with the grandchildren.”

Acknowledgement: PURSUN UK/Bradford Wound Care Group
Young women cannot marry due to stigma and live in poverty and misery

Photograph courtesy of Christine Moffatt
Patients with leg ulcers feel the stigma of their condition, especially odour and strikethrough
Cultural beliefs can affect how patients are perceived in the community.

Photograph courtesy of Christine Moffatt
Eight principles of wellbeing

1. Acknowledgement: 7bn
Living with a wound

- Vulnerability and exposure
- Repeated procedures cause anxiety
- Professional failure or misdiagnosis

Understanding the patient experience

- Study to collect qualitative data from 8 patients using NPWT at home for complex wounds
- There was a perception of lost control through the majority of participants
- Patient self-motivation was critical to achieving a successful outcome
- Importance of care strategies that enhance patient control through self-management

Understanding what is happening

Symptom control

Positive professional relationships

Returning to health

Poor communication

Failed wound healing

Poor discharge planning

Failure to recover

Negative Pressure Wound Therapy\(^{12}\)
Active intervention
Wound healing
Control of symptoms
Living at home

Increased control

Decreased control

Developing a shared approach

Clinicians, healthcare organisations and industry need to:

• **Work with individuals** living with a wound to identify and address their concerns
• **Engender concordance** through empowerment and choice
• **Implement an effective treatment plan** through shared decision making with individuals living with a wound
Building a therapeutic relationship

• **Be fully focused** on the person and avoid distractions
• **Ask questions** and consider how the person may react
• **Avoid interrupting and listen** attentively
• **Record any observations** and build up information over several visits
• **Avoid barriers**, eg professional defensiveness, labelling and be aware of cultural differences
Developing tools for wellbeing

- Wellbeing is subjective, fluctuates over time and is **difficult to measure**
- **Focus on self-reporting** and observational methods
- Build a relationship with the individual that is **equitable and based on trust**
- **Allow time** to ask about wellbeing

Tools to elicit information on wellbeing need to be practical, easy to use and able to be adapted for any clinical setting or patient interaction
Asking trigger questions

1. Has your wound improved or got worse? Please describe. If new, how did it happen?
2. Has your wound stopped you from doing things in the last week? If so, what?
3. What causes you the most disturbance/distress and when does this occur?
4. Do you have anyone to help you cope with your wound?
5. What would help to ease/improve your daily experience of living with a wound?

In considering which questions to ask, it is important to keep it simple
When questioning patients this should be done in an open rather than prescriptive manner and clinicians need to ‘connect’ with patients rather than simply fill out a checklist.
Different people will feel comfortable with different forms of communication. It may be useful to have a range of tools available to help with this.
Barriers to assessment

- Lack of a common documentation system
- Difficulty of accessing services, rushed clinic times or lack of privacy
- Inability to convey information verbally and in writing
- ‘Blunting’ or ‘avoidance’

There may be a ‘gulf’ between what individuals say they want and what clinicians believe should be provided\textsuperscript{13}
Acting on wellbeing information

• Asking questions about wellbeing and listening to patient’s stories can help clinicians understand how the person’s life is affected by their wound.

• Any changes can provide important feedback that can be used to implement appropriate strategies to manage symptoms more effectively or persuade individuals of positive trends.

“...it is important to find out what people like doing when they are well and to see if this can still be done or find ways of helping the person to achieve this...”
Optimising wellbeing for effective wound care

- Services that are flexible, easy to access and responsive to individual needs
- Education that explains treatment decisions
- Early identification and structured approach – ‘right treatment at the right time’
- Continuous training of staff to improve knowledge and skills
- Faster healing times and improved quality of life with reduced overall costs of care\(^{14}\)
Developing a five-point plan

- Clinicians, healthcare organisations and industry need to work together to improve patient wellbeing

Establishing patients’ preferences for information and participation in their care is the first step in creating a successful partnership, which can lead to improved satisfaction with care and better outcomes
Five point plan: clinicians

• Ask about wellbeing using a holistic approach and remember the patient is a 'person'
• Prioritise wellbeing in the assessment, treatment and management of a patient's wound
• Involve patients in their care by offering a genuine choice in treatment options and providing appropriate education and support. They should respect the right of patients to refuse treatment
• Use patient feedback to plan/adapt services
• Ensure collaboration with their colleagues: know when to refer and to whom
Five point plan: patients

- Expect to be asked about wellbeing and to prioritise concerns
- Recognise their right to discuss their wellbeing and voice expectations and worries about treatment
- Take an active role in decisions made about their treatment and commit to a sustained participation in the management of their wound
- Where reasonable, expect to be offered treatment choices and flexibility in care delivery
- Reflect on the way their care is delivered and provide suggestions for how services may be adapted
Five point plan: organisations

• Ensure the wellbeing of their staff so that they can care for the wellbeing of others
• Accept wellbeing as one of the primary drivers of knowledge-based, cost-effective wound care and commit to ongoing research
• Make available services that support patient wellbeing in the delivery of effective wound management. These should be relevant to the needs of individual patient groups and be non-discriminatory
• Support strategies that improve communication between clinicians and patients (including the use of modern technology, eg telemedicine, social networking and Apps)
• Monitor complaints and improve services accordingly
Five point plan: industry

- Develop innovative products that are in line with patient lifestyles and prioritise wellbeing in the delivery of cost-effective wound management
- Provide relevant and robust communication systems in collaboration with clinicians and patients
- Highlight importance of wellbeing and develop research agenda around wellbeing and wound management based on clinical and patient experiences
- Respond to feedback from clinicians and patients about the products they offer
- Maintain an ethical approach to production, marketing and product sales
Conclusions

• **Wellbeing is important for outcomes**
• Good outcomes depend as much on good self-management as good medical care
• There is a need for clinicians to develop a therapeutic partnership to improve communication
• Healthcare organisations need to support initiatives for wellbeing that respond to patient preferences
• Industry need to develop products that optimise efficacy, cosmesis and quality of life
References


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Smith & Nephew
The consensus document ‘Optimising wellbeing in people living with a wound’ is available as a free download from www.woundsinternational.com