

Chronic Wounds and Lymphoedema

By Keith Harding

Wounds are a common and challenging clinical problem. Similarly Lymphoedema is a common and challenging clinical problem. Many patients have to deal with both conditions and as such have a direct impact on each other. The frequency with which wounds and lymphoedema occur is only just being realized. As such there are significant challenges and opportunities for improving understanding and management of patients with these conditions. There are a wide range of diseases that result in wounds that are difficult to treat and the same is true for patients with lymphoedema. It is unlikely that effective treatment choices will be made until a clinician has made a diagnosis of the underlying disease and control of factors that are modifiable that are present that are delaying healing.

The increasing awareness of veno-lymphoedema as a cause for non healing lower limb ulcers is an example of the need for wound healing clinicians and lymphoedema specialists to work together. The challenge of delivering care to patients with complex clinical problems will only be addressed when an appropriately skilled team of clinicians come together to focus on individual patients problems. The comprehensive assessment, accurate diagnosis and effective treatment choice for each patient will lead to much improved care of patients and an inter or multi disciplinary approach is essential for patients with these problems. Building of teams is essential if progress is to be made in this area of clinical practice.