

The international Leg Club community



Ellie Lindsay OBE, FQNI

Independent Specialist Practitioner; Associate Lecturer (CRICP), London; Visiting Fellow, Queensland University of Technology, QLD

ellie.lindsay@legclub.org

It has certainly been a busy time within the International Leg Club community as, on September 2022, we witnessed the official launch of the first USA Leg Club in Los Angeles, Orange County, California. Known as the Excell Leg Club, Long Beach, California, the team under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Ty have taken the non-medial social model in its entirety, offering a drop-in treatment service in a non-clinical space for people suffering from, or at risk of chronic leg disease. The unique psychosocial Lindsay Leg Club® model of care allows nurses to treat patients collectively, saving both money and time, meaning that patients can step away from hospital or medical settings. It also provides a social environment away from home where people can meet others with similar conditions.

Establishing an international network of Leg Clubs has united health providers, nurses, general practitioners, patients, and the community with the common objective of improving an individual's health and wellbeing. To date, the Leg Club has delivered impressive improvements in quality of life (QOL) of the individuals. By engaging the community and empowering members (patients) to become involved in their care, the Leg Club Model reflects the current direction of travel in global healthcare delivery. In recent years, and through published informatics (McIntyre et al, 2021), the psychosocial Lindsay Leg Club model for lower limb care has demonstrated that it can be an alternative approach to the management of leg health, which can improve an individual's outcomes.

Meeting the global disparity of lower limb care and addressing the clinical and psychosocial needs of individuals with hard-to-heal (chronic) lower limb-related problems and leg ulcerations can be challenging. How practitioners meet these needs can change depending on the methods of care that is currently being prescribed and used. A social, person-centred approach to care delivery should be taken to enhance its effectiveness and to help us better understand the experiences of individuals living with difficult and painful problems of the lower limb. The Leg Clubs take this into consideration and addresses the individual as a whole, through effective communication.

The inaugural of the first Leg Club in the USA took place on 4 September 2022 at The Ranch, Long Beach, California. The

event was attended by clinicians, allied health professionals, gym instructors (from the Mayweather gym, Long Beach), academics, as well as members of the public. This spectacular event was organised by future Leg Club officers (volunteers), comprising members of diverse professions (Lindsay and Seckam, 2022).

Being an agent of change in everyday practice

The world's population is aging at an unprecedented rate. The proportion of people aged over 60 years will double from about 11% to 22% between 2000 and 2050. An ageing population has profound implications for the burden of disease, as well as social and healthcare systems. How well prepared are countries to cope with these changing demographics? Unfortunately, current elderly care systems are already unable to address the soaring demand from the rising numbers of older people, even in higher-income countries (The Lancet, 2014).

In recent years, the cost of pension and social care have increased, potentially overwhelming the UK NHS system. Senior citizens are socially isolated and have little or no peer support (Lindsay, 2020). Unless we reshape care delivery, harness technology and reduce variations in the quality and safety of the care we deliver, the general public's changing needs will go unmet, people will be harmed rather than cured and unacceptable variations in outcomes will persist (Sackett et al, 1996). However, health is a basic human right. It is fundamental for developmental



Figure 1. The international Leg Club community at the launch of the first Leg Club in the USA.



Figure 2. Inaugural of Leg Club USA at The Ranch, Long Beach, California.

aspects of social health and is increasingly being acknowledged as a vital element of healthcare development and wellbeing. Today, the NHS is facing well-documented challenges, financial constraints and structural changes (Lindsay, 2012). The challenge, therefore, is to meet the new and ever-growing demands in an innovative and cost-effective way.

The growing prevalence of venous leg ulcers in an aging population presents global challenges for wound care and management. According to a recent magazine aimed at the older



Figure 3. Members of the Excell Leg Club USA.

generation, there are now 22671 500 people over 50 in England and Wales—almost one in five of the population. Today, there are almost 11 million people aged 65 and over—19% of the total population. In 10 years' time, this will have increased to almost 13 million people or 22% of the population (info@ageing-better.org.uk). Additionally, nearly half of the elderly living alone in the UK are in poverty. We have also seen a reduction in our life expectancy (0.3 years for women and 0.4 years for men). Meanwhile, the number of years we can expect to spend in good health without a disabling illness continues to decline; this is now 62.4 years for men and 60.9 years for women. Thus, a major demographic shift is unfolding and scientific and medical advances, population growth, change in societal age, compounded by a global shortage of nurses, will have an impact on lower limb management in the future (Lindsay, 2022).

In addition to financial and logistical challenges, the expectations of the public is changing. Individuals may visit their clinicians demanding specific courses of treatment and have high expectations relating to health promotion and education designed to prevent disease (Lindsay, 2014). Clinicians will have to respond proactively, as the potential of modern cost-effective technologies are linked together in a creative and collaborative process for successful care delivery through the use of social and other such effective methodologies.

Addressing disparities in care within a complex healthcare system

The Lindsay Leg Club model is an alternative approach to the management of leg health that can improve patient outcomes (McIntyre et al, 2020). Evidence shows that when the traditional approach to the management of leg care is compared with a model that encourages the patient to play a greater role in their treatment, outcomes are improved. Findings have shown that where Leg Clubs are already in existence, non-adherence with treatment and occurrence of infection has been virtually eliminated, many long-standing ulcers have healed, and an exceptionally low incidence of recurrence has been recorded. Research highlights an improvement in patients' QOL in conjunction with substantial savings in the cost of treatment. In short, Leg Clubs deliver patient-centred care in a social setting. Patients become members and are supported by nurses to become shared decision makers. This empowerment encourages patients to take an active interest in their treatment and care options. Members are given health advice on a range of conditions by the nursing team, who no longer use their valuable time travelling between homes in a never-ending cycle of treatment, recurrence and delayed healing.



Excell Leg Club USA: thinking out of the box!

Globally, lower limb and mobility disorders are complex and currently managed by a range of healthcare services. At the same time, global public health services are having to cope with additional demands placed on them by changes in patient demographics, such as an aging society and the increasing prevalence of long-term conditions such as leg ulcers and diabetes. Partnerships between health and social care organisations are evolving rapidly in the global private and primary health sectors, with an aim to provide the most effective and seamless service, meeting the needs of local populations. Hence, the introduction of the first Leg Club in the USA. The USA Excell Leg Club will provide an innovative prevention facility that will enhance patient experience, promote lower limb health and contribute to improved outcomes, which will significantly be more cost-effective than the current service provision. Wound care is interdisciplinary, involving several different professionals and services. Excell Leg Club has comprised an outstanding multidisciplinary and multiagency team of professional experts who have volunteered their time, ranging from medical directors, hospital CEOs, rehabilitation experts, clinicians, community outreach workers and fitness trainers, who will be involved in an individual's treatment journey. People who are either at risk of lower limb disorders or already suffer from them will see significant benefit from these services, which are delivered in one place to facilitate early intervention and prevention of disease progression that ultimately require secondary care or acute interventions.

Conclusion

The Leg Club philosophy conforms to a global government's vision of a society where individuals and communities have more power, responsibility and are encouraged to create better

neighbourhoods and local services. Additionally, the Excell team were immensely proud to obtain a proclamation from the Mayor of California, Robert Garcia, who endorsed the first Leg Club in the USA. By thinking out of the box, Dr. Jennifer Ty's main drive for the California Long Beach Excell Leg Club has clearly demonstrated a genuine partnership between health and social care organisations within the USA health sectors, with the aim to provide a more effective, seamless service that meets the needs of local populations. Through forming partnerships with likeminded organisations, Dr. Jennifer Ty has ensured the voice of the individual, volunteers and communities are involved and are paramount for delivering public information and clinical education, leading to improvements in provisions of care.

As a result, the Excell Leg Club has been able to change their role substantially by facing up to new challenges and taking on new responsibilities through a coalition of support from community and voluntary sector organisations. **CWC**

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