

The Wellbeing Project, awards, and more



Health beliefs play an important role when treating and managing patients with leg ulcers. Higher levels of social support improve wellbeing and encourage treatment concordance. The Leg Club® model of care harnesses social support mechanisms to improve patient outcomes and provide numerous benefits for both patients and carers. The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation sees the assessment, promotion, and improvement of wellbeing of its members as a logical progression to the overall quality of service provided by Leg Clubs.

The Wellbeing Project

To demonstrate this, the Foundation made an application for a scholarship grant from URGO in 2012 to undertake a Wellbeing Project within UK Leg Clubs. Once completed, the findings would be significant as a wellbeing protocol. For the past 2 years, the focus of the work undertaken by two Foundation board Trustees had been to introduce, develop, and extend patient wellbeing in wound care (in particular, leg ulceration), and improve it within the social Leg Club model of care.

Although quality of life and wellbeing overlap, and the terms are often used synonymously, it is important to distinguish between the two. As part of our innovations, we recorded the importance of social support and connectedness; defined psychological constructs essential in wellbeing; and most importantly, detailed the effect of the social support embodied in Leg Clubs. The findings of a patient satisfaction study (Clark et al, 2010) showed that over 98% of our patient members would either recommend Leg Clubs or use them again. Further, our research has demonstrated the importance of social interaction on both wellbeing and wound healing. This results in improved patient concordance; better healing rates; reduced treatment costs; and ultimately, a better overall outcome for individuals with a wound.

Upton et al (2015) highlighted the considerable negative, psychosocial consequences of a wound and their relationship to poor wound healing and impaired psychological/physical health; little work has explored the opposite. That is, does the presence of positive psychological factors—such as hope, optimism, and resilience—enable better overall psychological health, increased treatment concordance, and improved healing speed?

Following 2 successful years of the Wellbeing Project, the findings have been disseminated and published by Upton et al (2015). The Leg Club Foundation believes that we can promote the concept and importance of patient wellbeing more widely.

Conferences and awards

International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG)

Symposium and oral presentation

The Leg Club Foundation, in conjunction with Queensland University of Technology, presented a 2-hour symposium showcasing the pioneering research and practice innovations being undertaken in the UK and Australia, at the recent IAGG Congress held in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Our joint symposium presented the benefits of innovative community health-care services for older people with peripheral vascular disease. We presented models and evidence on how to address the personal suffering and financial burden experienced by older people with chronic wounds. Our objective was to demonstrate how the combination of biological and psychosocial theories is necessary to address complex wound management for older people.

Presentation on value of older persons

An independent presentation was accepted in the IAGG Congress, which addressed issues highlighting the importance of the older person/retirees, working alongside clinicians within a social Leg Club model of lower limb care. The social model of care has enabled the retiree group to provide a valued and fulfilling role and remain as active as possible.

Nursing Times Awards 2016

The Foundation and Bradford-on-Avon Leg Club celebrated as finalists in the HRH The Prince of Wales Award for Integrated Approaches to Care at the *Nursing Times* Award Ceremony in early November. The Bradford-on-Avon team provides effective, holistic, quality, lower limb care. The Club's collaborative working, knowledge sharing, and integration with the community provide not only leg ulcer treatment, but also help to reduce social isolation.

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References

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- Upton D, Upton P, Alexander R (2015) Contribution of the Leg Club model of care to the well-being of people living with chronic wounds. *J Wound Care* 24(9): 397–405. doi:10.12968/jowc.2015.24.9.397

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