

Importance of attending conferences: being aware of what is happening around you

The 2018 conference season commenced with the Leg Club being involved with Professor Mark Whiteley and his vascular team at the second International Veins Meeting held in London. The meeting was hosted by The College of Phlebology, in conjunction with the Leg Ulcer Charity, Lindsay Leg Club Foundation and the *Venous Times*.

The aim of the international meeting was to bring excellence in phlebology to the forefront of clinical practice. It emphasised the importance of conducting first-hand research and increasing scientific knowledge to improve patient care. The meetings also stressed the importance of a multidisciplinary approach, in order to find better ways to prevent leg ulcers and empower patients who are living with them.

Attended by international consultant phlebologists, vascular surgeons and nurses, the content of the three days comprised of live cases, duplex scanning of pelvic veins and leg veins, foam sclerotherapy and a variety of scientific discussions related to all aspects of venous diagnosis and interventions.

There was a parallel three-day leg ulcer stream, which addressed the very latest investigations and treatments for venous leg ulcers, lymphoedema and compression management. On the final day, an interactive debate on current clinical roles and the future of patient-care delivery was extremely productive, with all disciplines expressing their concerns around lack of nursing teams and expertise and delivery of wound management from an international perspective.

An awards dinner was held to showcase the work of those who continuously strive in the field of research to make improvements that will ultimately benefit their patients and achieve positive tangible outcomes in wound healing. Entries for the award were assessed by an independent, international judging panel, renowned in the field of phlebology. The judges were impressed with the high quality of entries, demonstrating commitment to safe, efficient and innovative care. In the venous leg ulcer category, I was privileged to present an award for the best oral research presentation to a very special colleague, who I have collaborated and worked with since 2001. The award was

received by Dr Kathleen Finlayson, a Research Fellow in the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation at Queensland University of Technology (pictured). Over the past 20 years, Kathleen has worked on research projects relating to wound management and prevention, primary health care and service delivery, chronic disease management and evidence based practice.

Dr Finlayson said:

'I was really pleased and honoured to receive the award, as being involved with clinical research is the part of my role that I thoroughly enjoy and feel passionate about.'

As part of her award Dr Finlayson received an invitation from Professor Sergio Giancesini, University of Ferrara (Italy) to present her latest wound research at the Venous-lymphatics World International Network Foundation (vWIN) meeting in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italian Alps, January 23–25, 2019.

European Wound Management Association (EWMA) conference

Conferences play a critically important role in the ongoing education of health professionals, enabling the delegate to be aware of recent advances and enhance their clinical skills. This was highlighted by another outstanding EWMA conference, with circa 3600 delegates, registered at the Krakow conference.

The Leg Club has been a member of the Associated Organisation of EWMA since 2005, and the benefits of attending and exhibiting at EWMA are far reaching, and always an exciting time for the Leg Club, as it enables one to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. Attending the conference also provided the opportunity to help spread information about the psychosocial Leg Club model of care. Through the networking and professional development gained by being a delegate and exhibiting at EWMA, we have developed strong international relationships. Also, I had the pleasure of meeting the clinical team from Espoo in Finland, home of the country's first Leg Club.

Good conferences provide opportunities to network and form new relationships, as well as strengthening existing ones. An example of an existing relationship, has been working with Mole Productions, since the embryonic stage of developing a digital platform for the Leg Club website in 2005, and seeing where the Leg Club website platform is to date www.legclub.org. Naturally, we were delighted to welcome Nicola Ashton (Director, Mole) to our stand, as normally our working relationship is conducted virtually. However, on this occasion I was able to witness the

Ellie Lindsay OBE

Life President, Lindsay Leg Club Foundation
ellie.lindsay@legclubfoundation.com

Mole team working hard throughout the 2018 EWMA event.

The conference organisers have always enabled delegates to capture current topics and daily news through the *EWMA Daily*, which is published by MA Healthcare. The EWMA social media channel also provides daily highlights, which included a synopsis of interviews and presentations.

Awareness of leg-ulcer management has grown in the UK, and healthcare providers and commissioners now recognise the need to provide effective care. However, how the NHS is funded and how services are procured, presents new challenges and opportunities for NHS providers to embrace a new generation technology in wound management.

The development of new and effective interventions in wound care remains an area of intense research, and medical technology in wound management is continually advancing ways in which leg ulcers can be managed. There were numerous examples of new generation products at the exhibition stands, ranging from bandage therapy, new generation dressing to a resurgence of historical applications, such as oxygen therapy.

Years ago, I can remember a ward sister explaining the virtues of using her home-produced honey on wounds, and the application of egg whites and oxygen to manage pressure ulcers. While this went out of fashion many years ago, eggshells are being tested as a treatment for chronic wounds. The membrane on the inner surface of the shell is thought to have healing properties, and European researchers have developed a dressing based on this material. Initial results suggest the eggshell dressing speeds up healing by providing proteins that skin needs (Guarderas et al, 2016). The use of honey and oxygen in wound care products have also enjoyed a revival, with considerable research being conducted adding to an existing body of evidence.

Smartphone technology has now become a significant part of our lives. Smart technology enables smart connectivity, for example connecting digital hearing aids to apps, accessories, and other smart devices. The one smart technology that caught my eye was a simple, lightweight hand-held device the size of a phone, which extracts oxygen from the air, and 'delivers' it through a thin flexible tube to the unique Oxygen Delivery System, which is in direct contact with the wound surface. There is a small green light on the device that will flash as soon as oxygen is flowing, and once in position, the device will start producing oxygen. A fully charged battery pack should run the device for at least 24 hours. This continuous supply of oxygen ensures an oxygen-rich environment around the wound area.

The benefits of this for patients is that the equipment is silent, with no sensation of movement, while providing a continuous flow of humidified oxygen. The clinical evidence and results that were presented during a symposium at EWMA offers a real change in the management of chronic non-healing wounds. Wounds that had been present for over 12 months where completely healed within 12 weeks, and this offers significant value to both the clinician and the budget holder. Furthermore, due to the design of this therapy and ease of use, there is no need to change practice or dressings used, the delivery system is just added under the current dressing regime. However, perhaps more importantly due to its portability and simplicity, patients don't need to put their life on hold while the wound is healing.



Legs Matter Campaign raised the profile to an international audience

The 'Legs Matter' coalition aims to get the nation thinking and talking about leg and foot conditions, including non-healing wounds, varicose veins and oedema, and the profile of the Legs Matter campaign was well received at both the Tissue Viability Society (TVS) and Leg Club exhibition stands. Delegates were interested in the aims of the coalition and how each organisation aims to communicate to their members or audience, NHS local provider services, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and GP commissioning consortia, national third-sector organisations and others concerned with provision of clinical services and the need to improve care of the lower limb.

Collaboration of professional societies and third sector organisations has been a major factor in bring this campaign to fruition. The Leg Club Foundation, alongside the TVS, The British Lymphology Society, Accelerate Community Interest Company, The College of Podiatry, The Society of Vascular Nurses, Foot in Diabetes UK and The Leg Ulcer Forum have come together to pool their knowledge and resources, to deliver a campaign promoting the hidden issue of lower-leg conditions, and supporting the development of good-quality lower-leg care throughout the UK. Visit the Legs Matter website for further information.

Save the date.....

Over the years, the Leg Club conference has grown into an arena and venue for those developing and improving wound management. The annual Leg Club conference is a platform for networking and sharing important knowledge:

Annual Leg Club Conference The Challenge of Improving Practice in Wound Management

26 and 27 September 2018

Guarderas F, Leavell Y, Sengupta T, Zhukova M, Megraw TL. Assessment of Chicken-Egg Membrane as a Dressing for Wound Healing. *Adv Skin Wound Care*. 2016 Mar;29(3):131-4. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.ASW.0000480359.58866.e9>