

CAWC Annual Conference: The Second Act: Back to the Future

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The opening plenary session in any conference, where everyone gathers in a single place, is intended to set the stage for the conference to follow. The theme of Action 2014: Skin Health for Canada, a joint meeting of the Canadian Association of Wound Care and the Canadian Association for Enterstomal Therapy, in collaboration with the World Alliance for Wound and Lymphedema Care, is on the next phase of wound prevention and care, particularly as it relates to incorporating more types of health-care professionals into the fold than ever before.

To move forward, sometimes we need to look back to discover how the past has informed the future and what lessons we can learn about what best serves patients, health-care providers and the system—and what does not.

It has been 20 years since a seminal article in *Scars and Stripes*, the initial iteration of the journal of the Wound Healing Society, was published. “Problems of Chronic Wound Care,” by Keith Harding, stated that only when we address the

factors operating around an individual patient will we be able to offer comprehensive and professional care.

Factors to Consider

The early paper discusses four main types of factors that need to be considered when creating an environment that is optimal for patient-focused skin and wound management: society, health-care systems, professional factors and patient factors. Let’s look at each of these.

Society:

As predicted in the paper, the increase in the elderly population has become a reality. The result is growing concern on how governments are address-

ing both the demographic issues and an increased need for effective chronic disease management.

Health-care systems:

Administrators in hospitals, extended care facilities, clinics and community services now recognize the impact and cost of inappropriate wound care.

Professional factors:

Twenty years ago, the focus for wound care was mostly on doctors and nurses, and on encouraging more scientific involvement. Today, the science behind the ever-improving management of wounds is more embedded in the culture of care, and the world of wound manage-

Conference Tip:

Use the annotated agenda and the summaries on page 18 to help you plan for an optimal, customized conference experience.



ment has expanded to include not just doctors and nurses but many more types of health-care professional.

Patient factors:

The paper suggested that factors affecting and affected by patients, caregivers and family members were a necessary part of any care equation. Health factors, a patient's lifestyle patterns and behaviours should always be considered. A major summary statement in the article suggested that quality of life, comfort, return to normal function and cost may be equally important in the development of care for patients with chronic wounds. Although a need to improve the

focus on the patient was clearly outlined at that time, evidence suggests that the patient is still often left out of the process when planning the prevention and treatment of wounds.

Today and Tomorrow

At the conference, these and other ideas will be presented in the opening plenary (Session 3). Discussion will focus on the original paper and introduce the four key components, exploring how they are still current and how they can be improved upon in light of present-day knowledge.

To provide multiple perspectives, we will reintroduce

the components in a multimedia presentation involving key Canadian leaders giving responses to a set of questions about which they have particular expertise.

Through the interviews and discussion points relating to changes in the constitution of wound management teams and how they operate, we will compare and contrast the responses, showing where we need to go to support not only wound management but prevention. We will also focus on the concept of standardizing skill sets for wound management specialists, which is a topic that will be further explored in Session 17, "Who is a wound care specialist?" 

Four Components: Questions for Today

Society: How is the population in general plagued by chronic diseases and what impact does this have on the health-care system?

Health-care systems: What is the significance of inappropriate care and the aging population in terms of increased and inappropriate cost and suffering?

Professional factors: How does standardizing health care across disciplines and generations impact discrepancies in care?

Patient factors: What is the importance of patient involvement in care and what is the most effective process of patient participation?

