

The Voices of Skin and Wound Care Clinicians During the First Year of COVID-19

Summary of the Research to Date

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First, we would like to thank clinicians across Canada for supporting this research project. We are grateful for your commitment to prevention, treatment and management of skin and wound care issues.

The overall research aimed to understand how the delivery of skin and wound care changed during the pandemic. The study included feedback from nurses, dietitians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, physicians, chiropractors, podiatrists and other types of wound clinicians. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Board at Cape Breton University.

Participants were asked if and how they adapted delivery of patient-centred wound care services during the pandemic, with the aim of providing practical evidence to Wounds Canada as it continues to support clinicians through educational activities and the delivery of informational resources.

How: Participants were asked to complete structured, semi-structured and open-ended questions using a qualitative online survey methodology. Participants responded from across Canada.

Who: Individuals in the Wounds Canada database were sent a link to the survey via email. They read a Letter of Information and completed an Informed Consent form before completing the survey.

Participants were individuals who:

- deliver wound care services
- are a regulated or unregulated health-care provider
- were willing to complete an online survey

When: The study had a multiphase data collection timeline. Over 18 months, five surveys were distributed between May 2020 and January 2022. We compared, contrasted and analyzed the data for themes. To date, two articles have been published on this analysis and are summarized below:





Early COVID-19 and the experiences of Canadian wound care clinicians: Preliminary findings

Kuhnke JL, Jack-Malik S, Botros M, Rosenthal S, McCallum C, Bassett, K, *Wounds International*. 2021;12(2):14-19. Available from: <https://www.woundsinternational.com/resources/details/early-covid-19-and-experiences-canadian-wound-care-clinicians-preliminary-findings>

The preliminary data discussed in this article were part of the larger qualitative study designed to explore the experiences and learnings of front-line wound care clinicians in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. Questions in the survey focused on how the delivery of wound care services were influenced during the early months of COVID-19. The survey used a Likert Scale, with the option to provide additional details. Participant responses varied and were represented by five overarching themes:

1. Increased use of virtual-care technology during the pandemic

2. Unequal clinician access to, and expertise using, virtual care technology
3. Unequal patient access to, and expertise using, virtual care technology
4. Increased clinician flexibility
5. Lack of skin and wound education

This research is significant in its description of the limitations and challenges health-care providers faced when providing care during a pandemic. The data-collection process offered an outlet for clinicians to share their experiences and have their voices heard. It also identified possibilities for the provision of consistent and high-quality wound care during a pandemic. Furthermore, the data highlight some of the issues faced by clinicians and patients/families when technology is required as part of receiving care. These data could be used to develop new, or modify existing, professional development opportunities.





Creating and sustaining work-life balance while providing skin and wound care 6 months into a global pandemic: Second survey findings

Kuhnke JL, Jack-Malik S, Botros M, Rosenthal S. *Wounds International*. 2022;13(1):20-28. Available from: <https://www.woundsinternational.com/journals/issue/656/article-details/creating-and-sustaining-work-life-balance-while-providing-skin-and-wound-care-6-months-into-a-global-pandemic-second-survey-findings>

This second article highlighted results from data gathered during the second of the five surveys, which was emailed to clinicians in September 2020.

Three themes emerged from the responses to the second survey:

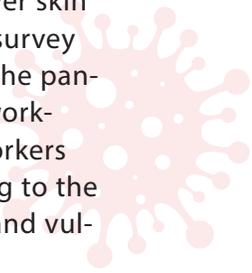
1. Clinician perspectives: working conditions and work-life balance
2. Location-specific policies and their impacts within hospitals, long-term care facilities and community home care
3. Technology as an asset and/or barrier

Findings from the first survey allowed us to appreciate some of the complexities of the pandemic, including far-reaching influences on health-care professionals' efforts to deliver skin and wound care services to patients. In survey two, we also began to understand how the pandemic was influencing home lives and work-life balance. In particular, health-care workers described the challenges while attending to the wellbeing of themselves, their patients and vulnerable family members.

This article provides an overview of the impact of this dynamic reality on the ability of health-care professionals to deliver care to patients as well as the consequences on psychological health, professional confidence, educational development and, importantly, work-life balance.

Next Steps

A third set of results have been received and the results are being analyzed. Our goal is to have the third and final article ready by fall 2022. 📌



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