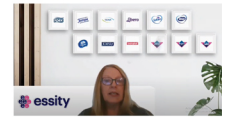


Essity Sponsored Session:

#SkinMatters in More Ways than One

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Skin: A Complex Structure

The epidermis is the outermost, avascular layer, which provides a waterproof barrier to control the passage of moisture into the body. The dermis below accounts for approximately 90% of the weight of the skin and forms the foundation of this organ system. The subcutis (also known as the hypodermis or subcutaneous layer) is the deepest layer of the skin. This is a section of loose, connective tissue that stores half of our body fats.

Skin has a number of vital functions, including:

- Physical barrier
- Chemical barrier
- Immunologic barrier
- Microbiome barrier
- Thermoregulation
- Osmoregulation
- Endocrine function
- Blood pressure maintenance
- Sensory function
- Socialization and reproduction

Injury to the skin can result in pain, infection, chronic wounds, disability, disfigurement, impaired quality of life, increased cost of care, increased length of stay, and death.

Skin Frailty

If an individual's skin has enhanced vulnerability, they are at increased risk of damage to the skin. Multiple intrinsic and extrinsic risk factors contribute to skin frailty (see box). Extrinsic risk factors include irritants from dressings, repeated skin cleansing, UV radiation damage, maceration (incontinence), some

Skin Integrity

Skin integrity is defined as "the combination of an intact cutaneous structure and a functional capacity that is high enough to preserve it."

Impaired skin integrity refers to an altered epidermis and/or dermis.

Skin frailty is defined as at-risk, vulnerable skin; not necessarily a wound, break or disruption.

medications, smoking and pressure. Intrinsic risk factors include genetic conditions (e.g., ichthyosis), skin conditions (e.g., atopic eczema), underlying illnesses and aging. Individuals at high risk for skin frailty include older adults, individuals with mobility issues/paralysis, children/neonates, individuals with spina bifida or cerebral palsy, bariatric patients, oncology patients and those with chronic illnesses.

Dressings for Frail Skin

The ideal dressing for patients with fragile skin should take the following factors into consideration:

- Control bleeding
- Easy to apply and remove
- Atraumatic on removal
- Provide a protective anti-shear barrier
- Optimize the physiological healing environment (e.g., moisture, bacterial balance, temperature, pH)
- Be flexible and mould to contours
- Be cost effective
- Afford extended wear time
- Optimize quality of life
- Provide secure, but not aggressive, retention
- Be non-toxic

The Leukoplast skin sensitive products (see Figure 1)

offer the following benefits:

- Help to maintain skin integrity
- Atraumatic removal
- Skin-friendly silicone adhesive
- Reliable adhesive
- Latex free

Figure 1. Leukoplast Products



Leukoplast Hypafix® skin sensitive can be used to secure dressings, secure devices such as catheters, tubes or drainage pipes, and protect the peri-wound skin and closed skin. Leukoplast skin sensitive tape can be used on an antimicrobial spool for scar management. The Leukoplast T&T plus skin sensitive dressing is a waterproof, skin friendly, anti-shear barrier that is flexible and mouldable and is easy to apply and remove.

Impaired Skin Integrity

Some of the consequences of impaired skin integrity (see box) include increased risk of infection, impaired mobility, decreased function, increased length of stay in hospital, loss of limb and loss of life.

In addition to the physical impacts listed above, impaired skin integrity also affects quality of life and

well-being for individuals. The World Health Organization defines quality of life (QoL) as “an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. Clinical factors associated with QoL include:

- Wound duration
- Wound etiology
- Wound size
- Type of exudate
- Presence of odour
- Presence of pain

It is important to gain insights from the patient and their family into motivators for shared/self-care and any misunderstanding, skepticism or objections and to address these factors to increase treatment compliance.

Well-being encompasses several domains, including physical, spiritual/cultural, psychological and social (including economics). The physical domain refers to the ability to function independently and attend to activities of daily living. Cultural and spiritual wellbeing is the ability to experience and integrate meaning and purpose in life through connections with one’s self and others, and may be associated with a specific religion, cultural beliefs or personal values. Mental wellbeing is the ability to function cognitively free of fear, anxiety and other negative emotions. Social wellbeing is the ability to be part of a family and have interactions with friends.

Skin Care

Essential elements of effective skin care include a

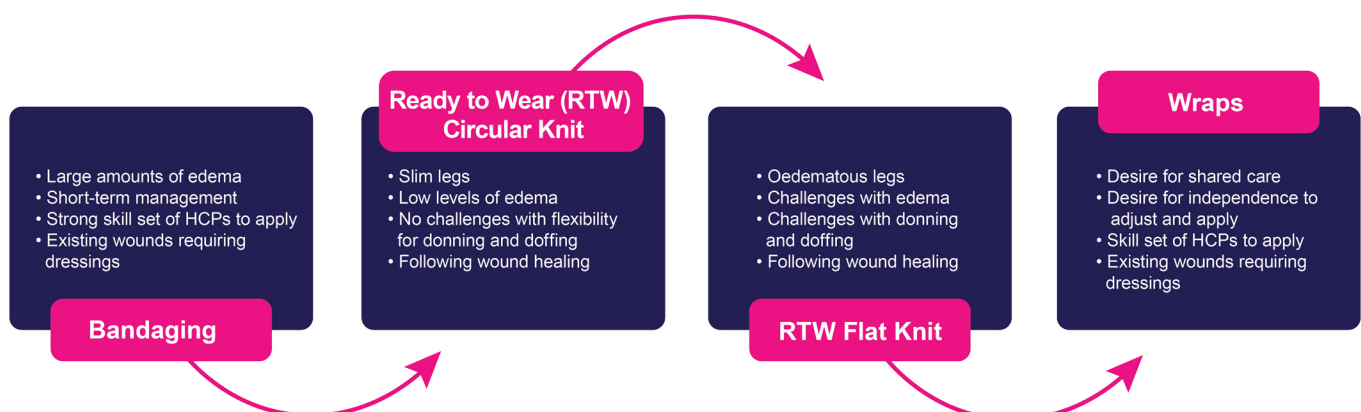


Figure 2. Navigating Compression Choices

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Skin Tone and Skin Assessment

The following are considerations specific to skin tone:

- Assess and monitor any skin changes with awareness of skin tone
- Use natural lighting or the light from a pen or phone – avoid fluorescence
- Include touch for assessment and diagnosis
- Remember, erythema is replaced by patches in patients with darker skin colour
- Document the usual degree of skin pigmentation for comparison

thorough, holistic assessment; continued skin monitoring and documentation; consideration of individual needs and preferences, general health status, mobility, nutrition, continence status and socioeconomic/psycho-social status; and development and delivery of evidence-based, person-centred care.

Skin Injury Prevention

Skin injury can be prevented with holistic patient care that incorporates the skin safety model. Clinicians should encourage skin cleansing using pH-balanced, no-rinse cleansers and soft, disposable, non-woven cloths. Care must also be taken with device application and removal; use the “low and slow” framework for atraumatic dressing removals.

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