

HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE, TREATMENT BURDEN AND QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE OF PATIENTS WITH VENOUS LEG ULCERS IN GERMANY

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Aim: Evaluation of health-related quality of life (QoL), treatment burden and quality of medical care among patients with venous leg ulcers (VLU) in Germany.

Methods: Data were derived from a nationwide study on the cost-of-illness and medical care in VLU in 31 wound centers. Disease-specific QoL was assessed with the Freiburg Life Quality Assessment (FLQA-w) including a specific tool for treatment burden. Patient-reported treatment benefits were measured using the patient benefit index (PBI-w). Patient satisfaction and patient assessment of quality of care were evaluated by standardized questions.

Results: Out of 218 total VLU patients investigated, 213 (97.7%) revealed QoL reductions due to their chronic wounds. Significant reductions of health were found in 27.1% regarding general health, 43.5% regarding wound condition and 38.5% regarding QoL. 46.4% showed significant burden of treatment, 46.6% considered therapy time-consuming, 48.8% were strongly depending on the help of others. Regarding treatment benefits, 85.4% of patients showed a PBI>1, indicating at least a minimum patient-defined benefit of the most recent treatment. In 60.4% of the patients, there was a PBI>2 which reflects relevant treatment benefit. Asked about their subjective appraisal of medical care, 67.5% of patients rated a good or very good care, 89.7% were satisfied with their treatment.

Discussion: This is the first nationwide German study on the quality of care in VLU. The patients were recruited in specialized wound centers. This may explain why a great proportion of patients is satisfied with treatment. However, even under optimal treatment, most patients with VLU face reductions of QoL. Hence, a special focus in the management of VLU should be put on patient-relevant problems such as pain and treatment burden.