

## **COSTS-OF-ILLNESS OF VENOUS LEG ULCERS IN GERMANY – A NATIONWIDE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY**

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**Aim:** To assess the costs-of-illness of venous leg ulcers in German wound centers.

**Methods:** Nationwide cross-sectional study in 31 specialized wound centers, including office and clinic-based dermatologists, surgeons, GPs and internists. Patients with confirmed diagnosis of venous leg ulcer(s) were consecutively recruited, interviewed and asked to fill standardized questionnaires. Major outcomes parameters were the direct, indirect and intangible costs related to the leg ulcers from the societal perspective. The patient case report form included questions on pre-treatments, quality of life (QoL, measured with the Freiburg Life Quality Assessment for Wounds, FLQA-w), patient-defined treatment benefits (PBI), quality of care and personal costs. The physician questionnaire focused on clinical data, wound status, resource consumption and costs.

**Results:** In total, n=218 patients (average age: 69.8+12.0 years, median 71) were investigated, including 62.1% women and 37.9% men. The median duration of wound was 7.0 years. Average total costs per patient and year ranged from € 9,900 to € 10,800, including 92% direct costs and 8% indirect costs. Direct costs to a large extent (88.9%) were costs for the statutory health insurances, the other costs being out-of-pocket expenses (11.1%). Major cost-driving factor was inpatient treatment, followed by nursing fees (home care) and medical products. Disease-specific QoL was significantly impaired in almost all patients, indicating high intangible costs of disease.

**Discussion:** Venous leg ulcers in Germany are associated with relevant direct, indirect and intangible costs suggesting early and qualified disease management.