

WOUND COMPLEXITY AND HEALING

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Over the past 20 years there have been major advances in our understanding of the biology of wound healing. However, despite increasing knowledge and the development of many interactive wound care products, clinicians will encounter wounds where healing is prolonged or never achieved. This paper describes how multiple factors, both within and outside the wound, can be used to give an indication of risk for delayed healing. It is important that clinicians learn to recognise factors that contribute to wound complexity and understand how these relate to the problem of healing. Management can then focus on initiating appropriate strategies and interventions. The challenge is to identify as early as possible when a wound is slow to heal. This paper also recognises the impact of non-healing on healthcare professionals who are under increasing pressure to justify their actions in terms of cost-effectiveness and clinical outcomes. The importance of psychosocial factors on healing is also introduced through one patient's experience.