

NATVNS
The National
Association of
Tissue Viability
Nurse Specialists,
Scotland

www.natvns.com

10 years with The National Association of Tissue Viability Nurse Specialists, Scotland

The National Association of Tissue Viability Nurse Specialists, Scotland (NATVNS), was set up in the 1990's by the first two Tissue Viability Nurses (TVNs) in Scotland. Over the last 10 years the group has grown and now has a membership of over 40 specialist nurses in tissue viability and wound care. The Group meets quarterly to discuss various issues relating to pressure ulcers and wound management. Scotland has a fairly small population of around 5 million, and we are lucky to have one core group who are able to take forward issues nationally as well as locally.

Over the last 10 years the group have worked together to produce a variety of documents, including Best Practice Statements on the Prevention and Treatment of Pressure Ulcers. These were done in conjunction with Quality Improvement Scotland, an organisation working in conjunction with the Scottish Government. Other achievements are as follows:

- Development of Core Competencies for Tissue Viability Nurses
- Setting up a Debridement Course with the University of Stirling
- Flow chart developed for assessment of excoriation
- Development of a generic Wound Assessment chart

Over the last 9-10 years members of NATVNS (Scotland) have been working closely with National Procurement Scotland to ensure that patient issues are considered when contracts are being developed. This has included Wound Management and dressing products; Bed Frames/Mattresses/Cushions and Negative Pressure Therapy, and covers both Primary and Secondary Care. This is a necessity as the Scottish Parliament has ensured that the Chief Executives of all Health Boards have signed up to National Contracts to ensure cost effective use of public money for patient care.

We believe that working alongside procurement and other disciplines, has ensured that all clinical issues are taken into consideration when deciding on products.

In October this year, the committee members of NATVNS met with the Chief Nurse for Scotland to discuss issues around the prevention of pressure ulcers. There is currently no national information regarding the Prevalence of Pressure Ulcers in Scotland, although many of us carry out audit at a local level. We believe that much more interest is being taken, particularly at Government level, about the development of pressure ulcers, perhaps related to an increasingly ageing population within our country. As Tissue Viability Nurses, we are particularly excited about the future, as we feel that more resources will be put in place to improve further the standards of care not only within the National Health Service, but in the private sector, eg, care homes.

After discussion with our Chief Nurse, we have plans to work on the following over the next 12 months:

- National grading of pressure ulcers using the EPUAP grading system
- National prevalence of pressure ulcers – audit to be carried out
- Care bundles for pressure area management
- Competency frameworks for all levels of staff
- Clinical quality indicators – pilot being carried out around Scotland at present
- Surveillance data – reporting and monitoring of grade II and above pressure ulcers
- National education for all levels of staff

Wound Management

Our country spends in excess of £4 million per year on wound care products. As part of the NATVNS Group work with National Procurement, we evaluate new dressing products, and based on clinical efficacy and available evidence, decisions are made on which products should be added to the national contract. Cost is becoming an increasing issue, but the importance of looking at how the wound companies support clinical staff with education, training and clinical data is also appreciated. Based on all these issues, cost-effectiveness decisions are made, and by April 2008 there will be a National Contract for wound products covering both acute and

community areas within Scotland. Each Health Board can then develop their own formulary from the National Contract products available, ensuring cost-effective wound care for all areas of Scotland.

Future plans

In May this year we were delighted to be a supporting organisation of the EWMA Conference in Glasgow. We look forward to our continuing collaboration with EWMA and participating in future Conferences.

The next year will be a challenge for the Association, as we begin work with the Scottish Government on a National approach to Tissue Viability. The work of the NATVNS is ultimately about establishing and maintaining high standards of patient care.

I am sure our members will continue to work together to achieve these aims.

*Anne Ballard-Wilson
Vice Chair, NATVNS*

