



Current practice in the management of wound odour: An international survey

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Abstract

Aim

To determine from a multi-disciplinary and international perspective current practice in the management of wound odour.

Background

Malodour is cited by patients and carers as one of the most distressing and socially isolating aspects of their wounds. The absence of a standardised approach to assessment and management underscores the need to collect baseline data to support guideline development.

Design

On-line survey.

Methods

A study specific questionnaire in English, Spanish, Italian and German was emailed to wound care organisations worldwide, palliative and oncology nursing organisations, and known contacts with a special interest in wound management, for distribution to members between December 2011 and February 2012.

Results

1444 people from 36 countries responded. 12% assess odour with descriptive words being the most frequent form of assessment. Charcoal and silver based dressings were the most frequently used odour management agents, yet, only 48.4% and 23% respectively reported these as being very

effective. Antimicrobial agents were cited as most effective but were not the most frequently used. 8% use aromatherapy oils direct to the wound, and 74% combine a range of dressings to try and manage odour. Odour, pain and exudate management were the greatest wound management challenges facing patients and clinicians. 46.7% of respondents encounter patients with MFW on a monthly basis and 89% agreed there is a need to develop guidelines in this area.

Conclusion

A 'trial and error' approach to odour management exists with low overall satisfaction with current practice. There is a need for research and education on means to assess odour and odour management options.