

Embedding wound management education into existing curricula



SAMANTHA HOLLOWAY
Academic Editor, *Wounds UK*;
Reader, Programme
Director, Cardiff University
School of Medicine, Cardiff

In this editorial I would like to reflect on the developments in wound curricula across Europe, in particular the role that the European Wound Management Association (EWMA) has had in developing curricula frameworks for post-registration nursing education.

Education has been one of EWMA's focus main areas of since its foundation. Improving education about wound management and care is an important element in the realisation of one of EWMA's main objectives, to improve and develop wound management in Europe. With that in mind EWMA has developed three curricula documents aimed at the provision of wound management education at Diploma (Level 5) (Pokorná et al, 2017), Degree (Level 6) (Probst et al, 2019) and Master's (Level 7) (Holloway et al, 2020) levels of study. The purpose of the curricula are to provide nursing colleges and higher education institutions across Europe with a suggested core curriculum for wound management education.

One of the main challenges we faced in developing the curricula documents was the difference in how both pre-registration and post-registration education are provided across Europe. For example in Germany nursing education is provided in nursing colleges at level 5 whereas in the UK undergraduate nursing students are expected to have reached level 6 by the end of Year 3 of their studies. After which time the natural progression is to follow programmes of study at Level 7 to reflect an advanced level of knowledge and practice. Hence the need for curricula that reflect a higher level of learning outcomes as an individual progresses through their learning journey.

The Level 7 curriculum extends the scope of the previous curricula to reflect the expectations of a Masters student. The focus is on the evidence underpinning practice and requires the student to interrogate existing research and question current approaches to the prevention,

assessment, and management of wounds. The curriculum also introduces the notion of evidence-informed practice (World Health Organisation, 2017) in recognition of the gaps in the evidence base for managing individuals with wounds.


The content of the curriculum reflects the need for students to be able to deal with complex situations and use problem-solving techniques. It has been expanded to incorporate leadership and management skills development as these are deemed to be fundamental to level 7 clinical practice. A core requirement of the Level 7 curriculum is the submission of a final thesis/project/dissertation, the criteria for which needs to be defined at a local level. The final stage of the development of the Level 7 curriculum included expert validation of the content to ensure it was fit for purpose. The intention of this curriculum is that it could be implemented or adapted depending on the local context, according to the professional scope of practice and code of conduct.

The Level 7 curriculum is presented in a modular structure but is designed to be flexible allowing selected units of study to be presented and undertaken in an order deemed appropriate by the individual educational institution. The suggested number of credits (based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System), hours and work experience are provided as a guide only and can also be amended to meet existing programme requirements. The curriculum includes; 21 units of study with a minimum total of 162 hours of lectures/face-to-face teaching (of 45 minutes duration); self-directed learning based on structured tasks within a healthcare related environment, equal to 50 hours of workload and supervised practice in the workplace. The recommendation is that the supervised practice should take place in different healthcare settings with clinical experience in the management of individuals with wounds.

In order to ensure the curriculum was fit for purpose a validation survey was undertaken with members of the EWMA Teacher Network. Of the 87 members of the Teacher Network 27 responded (31%). The respondents represented 15 different countries and the majority 60% (n=16) worked in a University and provided both Degree and Masters level courses. There were 22 respondents (81%) who rated their level of agreement with aspects of the curriculum including: scope, aims, structure, progression, learning outcomes, content, estimated hours, learning methods and suggested reading. A threshold of >80% was set as the level of agreement.

The scope, aim and learning outcomes achieved a very high level of consensus; 91%, 91% and 82% agreement respectively. Levels of agreement for progression, learning methods and suggested reading fell just short of the 80% agreement (77% in each case) and content, structure and estimated hours were lower, 73%, 64% and 64% respectively. The lowest agreement scores for structure and estimated hours led to amendments in the curriculum including; combining two units of study (Business Skills Development and Project Management) into one unit—Leadership and Management Skills. Importantly, educational providers need to be aware that the curriculum can be adapted to suit

local needs, for example, the units of study can be combined further and delivered in a different order and the estimated hours are a suggestion and can be amended to meet local requirements for professional education.

The National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP) for England has already raised the profile of wound care in the UK, with education identified as a central need as part of the strategy (Webb 2018). It is hoped that the EWMA level 7 curriculum can be used as part of future educational approaches to facilitate standardisation moving forwards. 

REFERENCES

- Holloway S, Pokorná A, Janssen A, Ousey K, Probst S (2020) Wound curriculum for nurses: Post registration qualification wound management: European Qualification Framework level 7. *J Wound Care* 29:7 Sup7
- Webb R (2018) Development of a National Wound Care Strategy: debating the issues. *J Wound Care* 27(6):403. <https://doi.org/10.12968/jowc.2018.27.6.403>
- Pokorná A, Holloway S, Strohal R. (2017) Wound curriculum for nurses: post-registration qualification wound management: European qualification framework level 5. *J Wound Care* 26(12 Suppl 12):S1–S27. <https://doi.org/10.12968/jowc.2017.26.Sup12.S1>
- Probst S, Holloway S, Rowan S, Pokorná A. (2019) Wound Curriculum for Nurses: Post-registration qualification wound management: European qualification framework level 6. *J Wound Care* 28(Sup2a):S1–S33. <https://doi.org/10.12968/jowc.2019.28.sup2a.s1>
- World Health Organisation (2017) Facilitating evidence-based practice in nursing and midwifery in the WHO European Region. World Health Organisation. Denmark. <https://tinyurl.com/y6dc8u38> (accessed 24 August 2020)