

Wounds UK conference 2020: supporting virtual learning



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This year has certainly been one we will not forget, it has brought with it many changes to daily life and presented many challenges for all of us. Across the wound healing community there have been a number of examples of creative and innovative approaches both in clinical practice as well as in terms of providing opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) and education. I think we are all quite familiar with attending a learning event online now and in fact, this does bring with it certain merits. For myself, I have found I have been able to participate in many more CPD activities than I would have previously, as there is no longer the need to travel. Any concerns about this experience being less engaging and interactive have not been borne out in the experience of taking part. This leads me on to the Wounds UK annual conference for 2020, which of course is virtual for the first time and it is free to all!

The conference is running between the 9–11 November and will include streamed sessions on clinically focused topics. The online offering includes the Made Easy live sessions, each being 45 minutes and very interactive. On Tuesday the conference opens with an update of the activities from around the UK including sessions from each of the work streams that make up the National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP). We can also expect some useful interactions with colleagues outside of the UK in terms of what's happening in clinical research and also guidance for assessment of different skin tones which continues to pose challenges in clinical practice.

For those with a particular interest in the diabetic foot the Foot in Diabetes UK programme is running during the afternoon of the 10 November. The sessions include discussion of grading systems for diabetic foot disease, there will also be an opportunity to discuss the impact of COVID-19 both positive and negative. On the final day of the conference, sessions will examine skin and tissue changes related to COVID-19 as well as examining strategies for skin care under Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). There will also be an opportunity to explore the

concept of fragile skin more widely. The day finishes with a discussion of top tips for virtual consultations.

Across all of the sessions there are opportunities to engage with the speakers and ask them questions using the real-time Q&A facility. This is perhaps less daunting than having to stand-up in a conference setting and state your question in front of hundreds of people, so I would really encourage to engage in the discussions and be part of the conversations. Some helpful hints for asking questions is to do a bit of work beforehand to know which presentations you would like to ask a question in. Also make some notes as your listening so you remember what questions to ask. Sometimes it can be helpful to provide some context for the question for example including what country you're from and perhaps your role. Try and avoid asking closed questions, instead use open questions in order to prompt discussion. Sometimes you might have a comment rather than a question and that's ok. It can be reassuring for the speaker that you have an opinion on something they've discussed. Finally, don't forget that any activity you take part in can contribute to your CPD so why not take some time to reflect on what knowledge you have gained and document your learning.

The conference has been made possible by so many people from across different sectors including all the Wounds UK team as well as industrial partners and of course the speakers. So a huge thank you to all for making this happen. A special thank you to the chair, Jacqui Fletcher, who has just been awarded an OBE. This is a very well deserved accolade which represents Jacqui's commitment to wound care over many years, culminating in her return to clinical practice to support her colleagues during the pandemic. In relation to her award, one particular tweet congratulating Jacqui made me smile as it referred to the need to purchase a new fascinator (for which she is renowned for wearing during the conference) to celebrate. I would whole-heartedly support that call and hope to see some alternative headwear for the opening and closing sessions at the conference!

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