

Leg Club update

Education and training have always been at the heart of Leg Club Model. Now, more than ever, it is a challenge to meet the balance between clinical demands of work and taking time out for training and development. The Leg Club Industrial Partners have worked closely with The Leg Club Foundation to produce an E-Learning package that nurses can access online. This training is peer-reviewed and is an example of collaboration with industry to support the nurses in the field of leg ulcer management.

Leg Club Industry Partners (LCIP), have worked closely with the Leg Club since 2005. Education underpins the ethos of good healthcare delivery, and Leg Clubs have worked hard to standardise the care delivered around the country by systems, guidelines and documentation used by each Leg Club team. Following an initial training package, each club is supported with any additional training necessary.

Owing to the current economic constraints, many trusts are facing huge challenges in releasing staff for training, while balancing the needs and demands on the service. Front-facing clinicians have seen an increase in their caseloads. There has been a dilution of skills and education (Narayanasamy and Narayanasamy, 2007). Staff development in nursing is not a new invention: it has existed since the time of Florence Nightingale, who considered education an integral part of nursing practice (O'Shea, 2002). Nightingale maintained that nurse training was unfinished business because 'there is no end in what we may be learning every day' (Schuyler, 1992). Gopee (2005) provides a contemporary perspective on the importance of lifelong learning in nursing. In response to this, the Leg Club Foundation, examined ways to provide a solid educational base to support nursing staff and help to streamline and ensure the provision of high quality peer-reviewed training that could be accessed online.

Access to training material is a key area where industry and the NHS can work together. All of the LCIP partners offer educational support on their websites. Many also employ healthcare professionals like myself to support education and training nationally. Collating all the available data and putting it into a format that was both user-friendly and relevant was allocated to a few partners. Several days were spent with the Trustees (Professor Michael Clark, Trudie Young, Lecturer in Tissue Viability, Bangor University, North Wales and Deborah Glover, independent advisor and medical writer), who have a wealth of experience within health care and tissue viability. All the data was peer-reviewed and the E-learning zone was launched in November 2010.

A voucher is assigned to each site providing a password to access the online package for each Leg Club nurse. A workbook lays out the criteria in an easy to follow design, so that each student may work at their own speed to complete each of the six 'standards' or chapters of the pack. Reading material and powerpoint presentations are provided, including resource links to best practice documents and national or international guidance, enabling nurses to research each topic without having to search too far. Once completed, there are practical competencies to meet, in conjunction with a named local facilitator to ensure that theory and practice are united (Lindsay, 2010).

The E-learning modules are as follows.

1. Understand and discuss the Leg Club Model
2. Describe the anatomy and physiology of the skin and the arterial and venous system
3. Explain the theory of moist wound healing and wound bed preparation
4. Explain the theory between the underlying pathology and leg ulceration
5. Examine the individual's limb and

6. Critically appraise the range of treatments and justify the selection of different therapies for individuals with leg ulceration.

Links to other sources of information provided by the industry partners are available. Trudie Young and I have just completed a model on sharp debridement which we hope will be available by November.

I have taken this model further in that staff from Aspen Medical are encouraged to support Leg Clubs in their area of work. Aspen sales teams and managers now undertake the Leg Club training, while some are healthcare professionals many are not. This training raises awareness of the challenges and complexity of leg ulcer management. As the training is peer-reviewed and independent, I am confident that our sales teams have a better insight in supporting Leg Club Nurses. This not only raises awareness of the quality and independence of the Leg Club training, but also ensures that LCIP partners are well informed. **WUK**

References

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