

Welcome to the EWMA edition of *Wounds UK*



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REFERENCES

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- NHS England (2014) *Putting Patients First: The NHS England Business Plan for 2013/14 – 2015/16*. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/pp-1314-1516/> (accessed 12.04.2016)

This year the European Wound Management Association (EWMA) is celebrating its 25th anniversary and has the theme 'Patients, Wounds, Rights.' Over the past 25 years we have all witnessed an array of changes in healthcare delivery and provision — with patients who have complex care needs being cared for in the community rather than in hospitals; the emergence of advanced nurse practitioners, specialist nurses and consultant nurses who diagnose, treat and manage patients; and a requirement for pre-registration nursing students to complete degree-level studies.

Integral to this has been the importance of keeping the patient at the heart of everything we do, working collaboratively as an interdisciplinary team, and ensuring that the patient voice is heard when planning interventions. In 2014, the NHS (NHS England, 2014) published its vision for transparency and increasing patients' voices in improving patient care. Encased in the paper is an 11-point scorecard that measures performance in key priority areas. It is focused on receiving direct feedback from patients, their families and NHS staff.

The EWMA meeting will focus on promoting quality outcomes for each patient while exploring how we as health professionals can ensure the patient is kept at the heart of everything we do. The NHS Constitution (Department of Health, 2015) promises that patients, their families and carers, will be involved in and consulted on all decisions about their care and treatment, and that the NHS, local authority services, other public sector organisations and a wide range of private and voluntary sector organisations will work together to provide and deliver improvements in health and wellbeing. The introduction of personal healthcare care budgets for those requiring NHS continuing care attempts to provide patients with choice and control over the health services they receive.

SUPPORTING PATIENTS' JOURNEYS

What seems to be missing in all of these plans, however, is a clear strategy as to how patients are

supported to make informed choices and use their options wisely. The rise of social media has been astronomical, with patients, carers and families able to access the internet to glean advice regarding how to manage healthcare needs and wounds. While the internet provides myriad resources, it has no checks and balances, no filters to guide patients to high-quality evidence or aids for understanding the uniqueness of their situation. Wound care seems to have very few 'self-help groups' or charities, with notable exceptions such as the Leg Clubs (<https://www.legclub.org/>), to give patients a stronger voice, practical advice and support from people who have lived through the same experience. This edition of *Wounds UK* explores some of the issues, giving a voice to patients and examining their wound care journeys. Richard White's editorial explores patient self-help in the management of chronic wounds (page 8) and WoundCare4Heroes' Michael Clough describes his post-amputation wound care patient journey (page 32).

SUPPORTING NEW AUTHORS

As a journal we actively seek out novice authors to contribute articles, such as Callum Metcalfe (page 12) and Rachel Bussey (page 36), but appreciate that it can be daunting putting pen to paper. It is important to support first-time authors. They may have an entirely new and different perspective. Frequently they are clinical staff who do more of the hands-on care, and therefore may be much more patient-focused. The editorial board and publishing team are always happy to provide support in both developing ideas for papers and in helping with the stylistic aspects of writing, which seems to be the biggest challenge for many, who are concerned that what they do will not be right.

We hope that you enjoy the EWMA conference and that the sessions that you attend inspire you to keep your patients at the heart of everything that you do. We also hope that perhaps they inspire you to put pen to paper and share with others what you do to improve the journey for your patients. **WUK**