

Meeting reports

Activa Healthcare Study days

Constantly listening to nurses' needs, this year's Activa Healthcare popular Study Day Roadshows focused on the antiseptic polyhexanide biguanide (PHMB) and how, in a new type of dressing called Suprasorb® X, it is an important alternative to silver.

Suprasorb X+PHMB is a unique antimicrobial wound dressing for critically colonised and infected wounds. The dressing rapidly kills multi-resistant pathogens including methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and *Vancomycin-resistant enterococcus* (VRE), while also being gentle on healthy cells and reducing wound pain. There is no known microbial resistance to PHMB.

The free Study Days follow the publication of an independent Consensus Document on PHMB (2010), which concluded that: 'there is a wide range of evidence for this new generation of antiseptic PHMB dressings and that they are a valuable option for nurses when treating critically colonised and infected wounds.'

In recent years, demand has arisen among nurses for an alternative to silver dressings due to the limitations of the antimicrobial action.

Activa Healthcare, Queen's Award winner for Innovation 2003 and 2008, provided a full day of lectures and workshops in Birmingham, Warrington, Bristol, Brentwood and York. The speakers included: Professor Richard White, Clinical Nurse Specialist Andrew Kingsley, Professor Val Edwards-Jones, Tissue Viability Nurse Specialist Sian Fumarola, Nurse Consultant for Prevention and Control of Infection Martin Kiernon, and Consultant Lecturer Jackie Stephen-Haynes.

Sian Fumarola, Clinical Nurse Specialist, University Hospital of North Staffordshire, said in her talk on *Removing the barriers to effective management of a wound infection*: 'I have seen the clinical

evidence for Suprasorb X+PHMB and the difference that it makes in my own patients. It is a significant step forward in the treatment of critically colonised and infected wounds. It is worth considering an evaluation as the benefits are apparent within a few days on even the most difficult wounds.'

The attendees heard that PHMB has been in general use for approximately 60 years with no evidence of the development of resistance. It exerts little toxicity and has been found safe and effective in applications as diverse as treatment of eye infections and sanitising swimming pools. Specifically, studies in 1998 and 2005 (total of 3,529 patients), have shown that skin sensitisation to PHMB are low (approximately 0.5%), even though the tested drug concentrations (2.5 and 5%) were five to ten times the concentration normally used in wound applications (Schnuch et al, 2000; 2007). Comparative tests of PHMB's biocompatibility against other commonly used therapies have demonstrated its superiority to chlorhexidine, povidone-iodine, triclosan, silver and sulphadiazine.

Professor Richard White, Professor of Tissue Viability at the University of Worcester, said in his review of the

Consensus Document on PHMB, 'The new biosynthetic cellulose fibre dressings, which contain the antiseptic PHMB, are able to clear the vast majority of microbes from chronic wounds safely and cost-effectively. PHMB is an effective antiseptic, which acts quickly and has no known bacterial resistance.'

PHMB interferes with the bacterial cell metabolism by prohibiting the cell's ability to absorb any nutrients or dispose of waste products, it effectively kills the bacteria without damaging surrounding healthy cells.

The attendees also heard about a controlled, randomised prospective multi-centre comparative study by Galitz et al (2009) on the use of Suprasorb X+PHMB dressings against best local silver standard of care. The 37 subjects were all assessed as having high wound pain and critically colonised or locally infected wounds and had similar demographic and wound-related presentations. Treatment was continued over 28 days. The results of the study identified that both dressing regimens achieved a positive antimicrobial effect and pain reduction. However, in the case of the PHMB dressing, pain reduction was consistently greater and more immediate with significant pain reduction



Figure 1. Suprasorb X+PHMB range.

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occurring after the first day of treatment. The authors concluded that the PHMB dressing provided an efficacious, patient-friendly option for the management of these types of wounds.

Sian Fumarola, said of the study days, 'The recent Activa Study Days on the antimicrobial PHMB were useful on a practical level, with a good balance of science, nursing and clinical evidence. It was positioned at the right level for the multidisciplinary audience, which included community nurses, acute nurses, educationalists and tissue viability specialists. Antiseptics are an important part of nurses' work and learning about a real breakthrough with PHMB was of great interest. This was clearly reflected in the numbers attending the study days, especially in the current climate.'

Dedicated to nurses and patients, Activa Healthcare places pain management as a priority, reducing wound pain that is not only debilitating but a constant source of distress to sufferers and a challenge to nurses wanting to do the best for their patients.

For more information about Suprasorb X+PHMB, which is available on FP/GPI0, or free booklets on Diabetic Foot Ulcers, Leg Ulcers, Pressure Ulcers, Surgical Wounds, Trauma Wounds and the full PHMB Consensus Document, please call 08450 606 707 or visit activahealthcare.co.uk.

References

Galitz C, Hämmerle G, Signer M, et al (2009) Polyhexanide versus silver wound dressings — first interim results of a controlled, randomized, prospective, multicentric study. Poster presentation. European Wound Management Association Conference, Helsinki

Schnuch A, Geier J, Brasch J, et al (2000) Polyhexamethylene biguanide: a relevant contact allergen? *Contact Dermatitis* 42(5): 302–3

Schnuch A, Geier J, Uter W, et al (2007) The biocide polyhexamethylene biguanide remains an uncommon contact allergen. *Contact Dermatitis* 56(4): 235–59

11th Annual Scottish Wound Care conference, Glasgow

Wounds UK held its 11th Annual Scottish Wound Care conference on 9th September. As always, delegates travelled from across Scotland to attend this one-day event addressing a wide range of wound care challenges, including assessment, diagnosis, treatment and management.

The delegates ranged from student nurses starting out on their career to specialists in their field, all getting together to discuss and share the complexities of managing wounds in today's ever changing patient population.

The day started by discussing the issues of pressure ulcers, supporting the National Tissue Viability Programme for Scotland in trying to achieve a reduction in pressure ulcer incidence across Scotland. Pam Cooper updated the audience on pressure ulcers, their aetiology and resources to prevent and manage them. The national programme's goals were also outlined, and how they are to be achieved.

Heather Newton addressed the issues of managing lower limb ulceration. Her presentation reminded the audience of the importance of assessment and accurate diagnosis, particularly in the identification of arterial/venous leg ulcers. She also presented case reports on surrounding tissue complexities, where diagnosis can be extremely difficult due to cellulitis.

Wound exudate is often complex and frustrating to manage both from the patient's and clinician's perspective. Heather presented personal case reports sharing with the audience her challenges and solutions to these often complex multifactorial patients.

Professor Richard White gave a fascinating insight into the impact of wound infection on the wound and took the audience through a journey of the types of antimicrobial agents available,

their clinical benefits and precautions, and where and when they should be used.

Joanne Abbotts, from NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, presented results from a Scottish health technology assessment carried out on negative pressure wound therapy (NPWT). Her session provoked some real discussion and debate. The issues raised were addressed by Fiona Russell who gave an engaging presentation into the clinical use of NPWT. A wide range of patients and their unique challenges were presented, with clear rationale behind the use of NPWT and the expected outcomes.

The afternoon was a time of sharing. Members of the expert panel each presented two case reports. Real clinical challenges were raised for the audience to explore and ask questions, covering all aspects of wound care.

As always, the event provided delegates with a large commercial exhibition offering clinical expertise, product samples and literature on a wide range of products/technologies to facilitate the viability of skin integrity.

The day was a resounding success with delegates, exhibition, speakers and the Wounds UK team, returning home tired, but with renewed energy and purpose for their future challenges.

13th EPUAP conference, University of Birmingham

The 13th EPUAP conference took place in early September at the University of Birmingham, with the theme being 'The Flourishing of Science to support Prevention and Healing'.

The conference was a great success with over 400 attendees supported by a comprehensive exhibition that included 25 companies.

The high standard of the lecturers was set with the opening presentation from the President of the EPUAP, Dr Cees Oomens. The scientific programme

was well received being both interesting and informative. It contained a good representation of presenters from Europe, along with speakers from Australia, Canada, Japan and USA. In addition to the plenary sessions, there were four free paper sessions, three symposia by Danone, Gaymar and KCI, an ArjoHuntleigh workshop, the EHOB breakfast session and an update from the ISO work programme.

An important part of the conference was the integration of four new initiatives:

- ▶ The 2010 EPUAP Novice Investigator Award: Awarded to Ms Claudia Gorecki (University of Leeds)
- ▶ The 2010 EPUAP Experienced Investigator Award: Awarded to Professor Tom Defloor (Ghent University, Belgium)
- ▶ Student free paper competition
- ▶ Oral poster presentations.

Professor Carol Dealey, past president of the EPUAP, was presented with a plaque for her contribution to EPUAP and specifically her work on leading the European contribution to the development of the International Pressure Ulcer Prevention and Treatment Guideline (www.epuap.org/guidelines.html).

The Annual General meeting of the EPUAP took place in which Dr Michael Clark was elected as the new president.

EPUAP is now busy planning the 14th conference which will take place in Porto, Portugal, 31st August– 2nd September, 2011. The conference theme is 'Pressure Ulcer Research Achievements Translated to Clinical Guidelines'. Further information is available at: <http://epuap.org/flyer/Oporto2011.pdf>. EPUAP look forward to seeing many of our colleagues at the meeting.

Wound Care in the Noughties: 10th Annual Leg Club Conference, Worcester Rugby Club
Late September 2010 saw the 10th annual Leg Club conference held at

Worcester Rugby Club over the 29th and 30th of September. This two-day event attracted over 170 delegates and a vibrant commercial exhibition was provided by the 16 Leg Club Industry Partners.

The first day was dedicated to a series of practical workshops covering topics such as ankle brachial pressure index (ABPI) assessment using the latest diagnostic technologies, wound exudate, compression bandaging and hosiery, wound dressing selection, antimicrobial use and the role of electrical stimulation and other adjunctive therapies in leg ulcer healing. The structure of the day allowed all delegates to attend all of the 40-minute workshops, although it must have been with some relief that the workshop facilitators ended their seventh repetition of each workshop.

It is to the credit of all workshop presenters that they maintained fresh and challenging sessions over a very long day. Two additional workshops were also available — these focused upon the Leg Club model and discussed why Leg Clubs might be a useful addition to leg ulcer services and how to go about initiating a Leg Club in your workplace. All of the workshops were evaluated as being excellent and the blend of the workshops bringing international speakers such as Professors Marco Romanelli (Italy) and Keith Cutting (UK) to informal discussion groups provided an excellent learning environment. The first day ended with a formal dinner in the Worcester Rugby Club with the guest speaker being Earl Howe, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Department of Health.

The second day of the event was a formal conference chaired by Dr Michael Clark (Chief Executive, Lindsay Leg Club Foundation) and Trudie Young (Bangor University and a Trustee of the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation). The day started with an emotional presentation from the Leg Clubs of a gold Leg Club badge to Ellie Lindsay, founder of the Leg Club model.



Figure 2. Keith Harding and Ellie Lindsay cut the cake to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Leg Club.

The programme for the second day of the conference brought key speakers from the UK, including Kathryn Vowden (Bradford), Jacqui Fletcher (Cardiff and Hertford), Keith Harding (Cardiff), Jacqui Stephen-Haynes (Worcester). These well known wound healing presenters were most ably complemented by Dr Tim Cutler (Senior Consultant Dermatologist, Ipswich, and a Patron of the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation) and Andrew May (Consultant Vascular Surgeon and Chair of the Circulation Foundation). Finally, two international speakers attended the event, Professors Marco Romanelli and Helen Edwards (Program Leader, Wound Management Innovation, Queensland University, Australia).

Identifying the speakers at the Leg Club conference gives an indication of the quality of the programme, with the Leg Club conference offering a significant opportunity to attend a major educational event focused upon the health and well-being of the lower limb.

Worcester Rugby Club has been home to the Leg Club conference for some years and this relationship will continue in 2011 (with next year's event scheduled for the 28th and 29th September 2011). The venue is a high quality location for conferences and the service and support offered by the conference and catering teams helps to make the Leg Club conference such a success.