The Wound Care Academy: A year of learning, collaboration and growth

Karen Ousey
PhD, Professor of Skin Integrity, University of Huddersfield; Immediate Past President, International Skin Tears Advisory Panel; Adjunct Professor, Wound Care, Monash University, Australia; Fellow of the College of Wound Care Specialists

Samantha Holloway
Academic Editor, Wounds UK; Reader, Programme Director, Cardiff University School of Medicine, Cardiff

This joint Editorial focuses on the development and success of the Wound Care Academy (WCA), which was developed by Wounds UK as an innovative educational initiative designed to support the continuing professional development of healthcare professionals involved in wound prevention and management.

The WCA was created in response to the ongoing need for accessible, practice-focused education that bridges the gap between evidence, clinical decision-making and implementation in everyday wound care practice. The overarching aim of the academy was to provide participants with advanced knowledge and understanding of wound prevention, assessment and management, while simultaneously developing critical thinking, problem-solving and evidence-based practice skills. Participants were encouraged not only to enhance their theoretical knowledge, but also to consider how learning could be translated into improvements in patient care within their own clinical settings.

The academy was designed as a year-long blended learning programme. Learning commenced with a face-to-face study day held during the annual Wounds UK Conference in Harrogate, followed by a series of monthly virtual educational sessions delivered over the subsequent year. This combination of in-person and online learning was intended to provide both networking opportunities and sustained engagement with educational content. The face-to-face launch event incorporated masterclasses, debates, faculty-led discussions and industry-supported educational sessions. A distinctive feature of the programme was the use of structured debates around contemporary wound care topics, designed to stimulate discussion, challenge assumptions and encourage delegates to critically evaluate evidence.

Monthly webinars were delivered live and recorded for on-demand access, enabling flexibility for busy clinicians. Sessions followed a consistent format that combined independent educational content, sponsored educational sessions and interactive discussion. Real-time question-and-answer opportunities were built into the programme to facilitate engagement between delegates and faculty members. Educational resources, publications and supporting materials were also made available through an online platform. The curriculum covered a broad range of topics relevant to contemporary wound management. Subjects included: wound assessment and wound types; wound cleansing; prevention and management of wound infection; selection of wound therapies; negative pressure wound therapy; pressure ulcer prevention and management; lower limb assessment and management; lymphoedema and oedema; skin tears and lacerations; surgical wound management and person-centred care and safeguarding considerations in wound care practice. Sessions were delivered by a multidisciplinary faculty of recognised wound care experts and key opinion leaders. Faculty members included Professor Karen Ousey, Jacqui Fletcher, Dr Leanne Atkin, Fiona Downie, Kate Williams and Samantha Holloway, alongside invited specialist speakers.

A central principle of the WCA was that learning should be active rather than passive. To support this, the programme incorporated multiple-choice knowledge assessments, facilitated discussions, debates and reflective learning activities throughout the year. Delegates were encouraged to critically appraise evidence, discuss challenges to implementation and consider how learning could influence their own clinical practice. Participants were provided with a workbook that served as a longitudinal record of learning and professional development. Following each session, participants were encouraged to complete a reflective activity, such as producing presentation slides, creating educational posters, reflecting on case studies, developing action plans or generating discussion questions for wider professional debate. The workbook also included structured reflective templates aligned with professional revalidation requirements.

The academy was designed not only to deliver education but also to encourage participants to disseminate learning. Delegates were required to produce a piece of scholarly or practice-based work, such as a reflective report, case study, product evaluation or service report. These outputs were intended for presentation at the Wounds UK Conference and potentially for publication, providing participants with opportunities to contribute to

the wider wound care community. Attendance at the academy could also contribute towards continuing professional development and revalidation requirements, providing an additional incentive for participation.

Delivery of the inaugural WCA is now complete and feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive. Students reported that the course had enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the topics explored throughout the sessions, while also increasing their confidence in applying this learning to clinical practice. All learners engaged actively, contributing thoughtful questions and demonstrating a strong interest in understanding the evidence base and research underpinning the interventions discussed.

The course also provided valuable learning opportunities for the facilitators. Through the discussions, questions and shared experiences of the students, facilitators were able to reflect on and further develop their own knowledge and understanding. The interaction between learners and facilitators created a collaborative learning environment enabling both groups to benefit from the delivery of the course. A dedicated closed Facebook group was established to provide a forum for discussion, peer support and sharing of resources. On reflection, this was a useful platform supporting communication beyond formal sessions and provided an opportunity for learners to continue discussions, ask questions and share experiences. However, as facilitators, we recognise that we could have made greater use of the group by encouraging more regular interaction, posting additional resources and initiating further discussions to sustain engagement throughout the course. This is something that the faculty will be working on for the next intake of our WCA participants.

As facilitators we would like to thank all learners for their attendance, active participation and valuable contributions throughout the course. The questions, discussions and shared experiences enriched the sessions and helped create a collaborative and engaging learning environment. Without your commitment and involvement, the course would not have been possible — thank you all.