

Coming together within the tissue viability nurses community and beyond



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Summer is here and while most people will be looking forward to their well-earned holidays, this is also a time for reflection following the atrocities in Manchester and London. We witnessed all emergency services working collaboratively, caring for those injured and their families. We are living in uncertain times where it is vital to have a health service that is able to react quickly and efficiently to emergency incidents. The magnitude of an interdisciplinary approach to acute and traumatic wound management was exemplified during these horrific incidents. The paramedics were expected to manage bleeding, cover wounds and make people as comfortable and stable as possible prior to transfer to the local hospitals. This made us think about the relationship between paramedics and tissue viability specialists. Do paramedics liaise regularly with these specialists? Do tissue viability specialists and podiatrists with a specialist interest in tissue viability invite paramedics to study days or multidisciplinary team meetings? Perhaps now is the time to include this profession in many of our activities and review the dressings, compression and bandages that each ambulance crew is able to access.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

At the time of writing, we were awaiting the outcome of the general election, all parties are promising more money for the NHS, but how will this funding be allocated? We all know these specialist services transcend all areas of health care (acute, chronic and tertiary, and all age groups can be affected). Unfortunately, no politician highlighted wound care and tissue viability services as a priority, so we have to wait and see what the government will do.

TISSUE VIABILITY NURSES UK ONLINE

Many clinical staff will be aware of how much time is spent 're-inventing wheels', as every organisation writes its own policies, formularies and protocols. The local tissue viability networks do a great job of sharing information, but pulling together a national

picture is much harder. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have national specialist groups — but despite many attempts to create a national tissue viability group for England (Fletcher, 1995, <https://www.wcauk.org/about-wcauk>), it has been harder to establish. It was heartening, therefore — despite the unexploded bomb and the NHS email crashes in the days immediately prior to the meeting — to see the great turn out for the pressure ulcer NHS Improvement Pressure Ulcer Consensus meeting in Birmingham in May with representation from across the country. People had travelled for many hours to come and share their views and participate in decision making. It was certainly a lively day! It was also great to hear that on the long road home, a UK initiative was born. As the ever-organised and social media-savvy Louise McKeeney and Amy Verdon drove home, they were inspired by all the nurses who had travelled from all over the country and thought, how can we share and debate without having to travel? If you haven't already found it, head over to the new Tissue Viability Nurses (TVNs) UK page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1013874018744623>.

MAKING A STAND

It's time for TVNs to come together and make a stand on what is important, and point out unnecessary admin. We need to be sure that whatever we are requested to do, is for a good reason. Will it result in a change? Will that change result in improvements — for the patient, for the organisation or for the staff delivering the care, and if not seriously, why are we doing it? We have such little resource we need to make the best of it.

It was also great to see how prepared the TVNs were to express and debate their opinions with their peers and there were some very opposite views in the room so let's make the most of that spirit and work collaboratively. A UK Facebook page could just be the start. Perhaps it's finally the time for a strong national organisation that represents ALL the TVNs that become the 'go-to' for all. 