Setting treatment goals for the majority of patients, treatment choices may need to centre around the underlying cause (e.g. compression therapy for venous disease and off-loading for pressure ulcer) and are aimed to manage the disease process to prevent wound healing.

Treatment goals may be to:

- Prevent further injury
- Promote healing
- Minimise infection
- Reduce pain
- Improve quality of life
- Prevent readmission

Conclusion

The Triangle of Wound Assessment is a useful way of reinforcing verbal communication between caregivers, and can be used in both clinical and research settings.

References

2. Wounds UK. Available from: www.worldwidewounds.com
5. The development of the intuitive wound assessment tool (TAWA) that forms the core of the Triangle of Wound Assessment (TWA) was funded by the National Health Service Research and Development (NHS R&D) Centre for Innovation and Patient Safety and the NHS England Patient Safety Transformation (PST) Programme.
6. The Triangle of Wound Assessment is a framework that allows clinicians to focus on three key areas of the wound assessment process: the wound bed, the wound edge and the periwound skin. This framework is based on the understanding that any assessment of the wound must include an assessment of the periwound skin, as any assessment that focuses solely on the wound will not be effective. The Triangle of Wound Assessment is a useful tool for healthcare practitioners to use in the clinical setting to ensure that all relevant aspects of the wound are considered.

In this article, we will explore the Triangle of Wound Assessment and its importance in clinical practice.

Introduction

The Triangle of Wound Assessment is a novel tool that allows healthcare practitioners to assess the wound and its surrounding skin in a comprehensive and systematic way. This tool is designed to ensure that all relevant aspects of the wound are considered, and that the treatment plan is tailored to the individual needs of each patient.

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The importance of wound assessment

Wound assessment plays a crucial role in identifying the underlying causes of wound problems, and in guiding the selection of appropriate therapeutic strategies to promote wound healing and improve patient wellbeing. This makes easy communication between patients and healthcare practitioners that encourages clinicians to look beyond the wound edge to routinely assess and manage the periwound skin using the Triangle of Wound Assessment.

Authors

Dr. David C. (UK), Peter K. (Germany), Donald M. (Japan), Timothy R. (Canada). Full author details can be found on page 9.

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Using the Triangle of Wound Assessment

The Triangle of Wound Assessment identifies three distinct, yet interconnected, zones or axes, which call for different approaches:

- Periwound skin: rehydrate dry skin and avoid exposure to moisture to minimize the potential for damage.
- Wound bed: remove non-viable tissue (debridement) to return the wound edge to condition that will promote epithelial advancement.
- Wound edge: assess and document undermining, sloughing, and pockets that apply. Please tick all that apply.

Aim to establish cause and correct (e.g. rehydrate).

Figure 2 | Using the Triangle of Wound Assessment — Wound edge

Figure 3 | Using the Triangle of Wound Assessment — Periwound skin

Figure 4 | Using the Triangle of Wound Assessment — Wound bed

Debridement
- Rationale
- Indications
- Types of debridement
- Technics
- Debridement tools

Assessment of the wound edge (or rim) of the wound can provide information on wound characteristics and contribute to the overall wound assessment (Figure 2). Edges can be smooth or unclean, sharply demarcated, or indistinct.

Management of undermining
- Undermining
- Signs and symptoms
- Management

Exudate
- Significance
- Types
- Management

Infection
- Significance
- Types
- Management

Nutritional status is a key predictor of poor wound outcomes, and it is important to understand how the patient's nutritional status is affecting their wound healing potential.

Figure 1 | Using the Triangle of Wound Assessment — made easy

The Triangle of Wound Assessment should be used as a part of a holistic patient assessment. A holistic assessment aims to give a comprehensive overview of the patient, their condition, and the current stage of the wound, together with any factors that may impede healing (e.g., infection, comorbidities, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, malignancy).

Performing a holistic assessment

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To establish cause and correct (e.g. rehydrate).

Figure 2 | Using the Triangle of Wound Assessment — made easy

Figure 3 | Using the Triangle of Wound Assessment — made easy

Figure 4 | Using the Triangle of Wound Assessment — made easy

The Triangle of Wound Assessment is a useful tool in the management of wounds, as it provides a structured approach to assessing and managing wounds.

- Medications
- Surgical
- Local infection
- Systemic infection
- Biofilm
- Bioburden
- Spreading/systemic infection
- Local, plus:
- Maceration
- Stoma
- Erythema
- Oedema
- Abscess/pus
- Lymphangitis
- Delayed healing
- Poor nutrition and hydration
- Smoking
- Poor nutrition and hydration
- Smoking
- Poor nutrition and hydration
- Smoking

In addition, it is important to understand how the wound is affecting the patient daily. Factors such as pain, fatigue, and dependencies (e.g., feeding tubes) can significantly impact the patient's quality of life.

Devising a management plan

Devising a management plan is crucial in ensuring that the patient is receiving the best care possible. The plan should be individualized to the patient's unique needs and should be reviewed regularly to ensure effectiveness.

- Simple
- Moderate
- Complex

Infection
- Significance
- Types
- Management

The key is to identify the wound's management goals and set achievable targets for treatment. This will help ensure that the patient's needs are met and that the wound is healing optimally.

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