



RCSI

Case study using PathAguard LUCA

Ann Marie Burke Lecturer School of Nursing & Midwifery, RCSI, Colette Walton Tissue Viability Nurse St Lukes General Hospital Kilkenny

Introduction

Effective leg ulcer management involves both the care of the ulcer bed and skin of the lower limb. Appropriate cleansing of leg ulcers is vital in terms of managing bacterial bioburden and keeping the ulcer and periwound skin in optimal condition (Downe & Khatun 2016). Wound cleansing is considered an effective method to loosen and remove surface contaminants, bacteria, and debris from the wound bed. It provides the opportunity to visualise both the wound and surrounding skin whilst promoting personal hygiene (Fletcher & Ivins 2015).

Aims

This poster presentation will report on a single case study on the use of a new antimicrobial leg ulcer cleaning aid called the PathAguard Luca.

PathAguard Luca

The PathAguard Luca is an innovative leg ulcer cleansing aid which was designed and developed by an Irish company CMC HYGEA. The PathAguard Luca are disposable single use plastic liners or leg sleeves which are impregnated with silver ions. Their use allows for effective leg cleansing without the risk of spreading infection. These sleeves can be used on their own or in conjunction with buckets or foot baths and are easily disposed of after use.

Case Study

Mary a 73 year old lady was admitted to an acute hospital setting with bilateral infected leg ulcers. She was commenced on IV antibiotic therapy and referred to the Tissue Viability Nurse (TVN) service for management of her leg ulcers. On review Mary's legs were very painful and she was noted to be MRSA positive in the ulcers on both legs. She was nursed in an isolation room with poor wash facilities and no bathroom area. Mary was poor to mobilise and required the assistance of 2 staff to transfer from bed to chair. As a retired nurse Mary liked to ensure her hygiene was attended to and that her legs were cleansed properly at every dressing change. Prior to the introduction of the PathAguard LUCA disposable leg sleeves the only options available to staff to cleanse Mary's legs were to use saline moistened swabs, irrigate them or use a lined 22 litre sharps bucket to soak them. Throughout Mary's hospital stay we cleansed her legs using the PathAguard LUCA bags which proved to be time efficient, easy to use and beneficial for patient and staff alike. Mary's ulcers improved greatly during her hospital stay and she was managed in light compression bandaging once the infection had resolved and her pain had improved.



Discussion

The three elements to consider when deciding to cleanse a wound are technique, solution and equipment (McLain & Moore 2015). The general techniques used to cleanse leg ulcers are swabbing, irrigation, bathing or showering while the solutions used include water, saline or antiseptic solutions. The cleansing technique adopted dictates the equipment required and will range from syringes or showers to lined buckets (McLain & Moore 2015). The environment can also dictate the options available to staff in terms of equipment and facilities and what is considered acceptable practice in terms of leg ulcer cleansing. With healthcare associated infections on the increase and the need for effective infection control practices cleansing of leg ulcers in lined buckets may no longer be the most appropriate option available within the hospital setting. Apart from the potential infection control risks with using linen buckets to cleanse legs there is the manual handling risks and time associated with such practices that must be considered. Filling lined buckets, transporting them to and from the patient and then emptying them when finished can be both time consuming and physically demanding on staff (Downe & Khatun 2016). The PathAguard Luca disposable plastic leg sleeves offer a practical alternative to using lined buckets.

Conclusion

Effective cleansing of leg ulcers is a vital aspect of the overall management of leg ulcers. Apart from the benefits of removing surface contaminants, good leg ulcer hygiene can promote patient wellbeing. In our experience we found the PathAguard LUCA disposable leg sleeves practical and easy to use within an acute hospital setting.

References

- Downe A. & Khatun S. (2016) Demystifying debridement and wound cleansing. Journal of Community Nursing 30(2) 26-30.
- Fletcher J. & Ivins N. (2015) Is it time to review how we clean leg ulcers. Wounds UK 11(4) 42-48.
- McLain NEM. & Moore ZEH. (2015) Wound cleansing for treating venous leg ulcers. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. Issue 4. Art. No.: CD011675
DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD011675