CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

ScarPath: Standardization of delivering patient-centered integrated scar care.

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A pathological scar is a badly healing scar that is painful, itchy, red, thick and causes disability, diminished quality of life and socio-economic burden. Oscare, an aftercare and research center in Antwerp, Belgium, has built up a tradition in late stage translational research in assessment and treatment of pathological scars post burn, post trauma and post-surgery.

Adequate patient-oriented assessment of physical scar features is crucial in the clinical evaluation and follow-up of scars, in defining scar treatment options for the patient, and for medico-legal reasons (e.g., for reimbursement of treatment and proof of disability). Moreover, scar assessment is an essential component for scientific research focused on evaluating newly developed wound or scar treatment modalities. Patient perception is evaluated with questionnaires, patient reported outcome measures to inform individual patient and scar care. Objective measures should always be combined with PROMs to get a full scope of on the impact and disability. Recent discussions with stakeholders have shown that the time consuming aspect of data collection is one of the important hurdles in new developments of scar research and treatment and is considered as a barrier to integrated care. Moreover, no standardized assessment protocols are available within this field of research.

We address this gap by introducing a recently developed Electronic Data Capturing (EDC) platform 'ScarPath'. A user friendly tool for scar assessment and holistic follow-up which will lead to a more standardized method of scar evaluation and enables a better treatment outcome, patient participation and empowerment in assessing evolution of scars during treatment. Moreover, ScarPath creates possibilities for testing new scar treatments in large pragmatic trials by offering a simple and patient oriented scar evaluation tool. In the future mathematical machine learning models based upon the automated data collection will lead to predictions in terms of scar evolution and recommendations for therapy.

Oscare created ScarPath in collaboration with the University of Antwerp. The content was established in joined agreement and based on the clinical and research experience in our aftercare centre and on both literature evidence and empirical studies. In 2019 ScarPath was enrolled in the workflow in our aftercare center and in 2020 a HORIZON2020 – Digital Health

Europe Twinning project was completed. This project enhanced knowledge exchange and training between Oscare and a French rehabilitation center.

The ScarPath project will benefit patients suffering from scars, a common comorbidity in severe burns and often developed after trauma or surgery. Although we focus on researchers and clinicians to implement ScarPath in their standard clinical trials and big data collection, patients are key partners and the main focus. The results will be beneficial for the scar patient, allowing individualized and optimal scar care. ScarPath is able to assist the patient in the follow-up across multiple professionals and to process care data for multiple patients.