A dressing which can relieve wound pain?
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Introduction
Pain associated with leg ulceration has now become a well recognised problem (Ref: 1,2,3). The problem of pain at dressing changes has been addressed in the EWMA Position Document (Ref: 4) and WUWHS Principles of Best Practice Consensus Document (Ref: 5).

Companies have produced dressings designed to minimise pain at dressing changes (eg silicone dressings). However, management of chronic leg ulcer pain is a more complex problem.

Pain control is frequently difficult. Analgesia is not always effective. Some patients are reluctant to take medication and unpleasant side-effects of oral analgesia are common. Therefore a dressing which can reduce pain levels is of great benefit.

Aims
To assess the pain relieving properties of a new hydrogel sheet (ActiFormCool®).

ActiFormCool® is a two-sided, clear, transparent hydrogel formed around a supporting blue Polyethylene matrix.

Methods
Patients coming to leg ulcer clinic with painful ulceration were asked if they would like to try a new dressing which might help their pain. Ulceration was photographed and re-assessed at the subsequent clinic visit. Patients were asked to rate their pain 0-10 at each visit.

Results
10 patients attending leg ulcer clinic with lower limb ulceration of various aetiologies.

8 reported significant reduction in pain levels and commented on comfort of dressing.

1 patient who reported no change suffered from allodynia distal to ulcer relieved subsequently by Gabopentin.

1 patient reported ‘cold drilling’ ulcer pain which was worsened by ActiFormCool®.

Conclusion
Patients with painful ulcers need careful and on-going assessment to exclude other treatable pain eg infection, ischaemia, injury, neuropathic pain and to ensure efficacy of treatment.

The dressing was found to be helpful in controlling pain in 8/10 of patients in this evaluation suffering high levels of ulcer pain.

ActiFormCool® has become the first treatment of choice in managing chronic ulcer pain in this leg ulcer clinic.

References
Mixed aetiology ulceration before and after treatment with ActiFormCool®.

Venous Ulceration 2.

Painful pressure ulcer on heel receives immediate pain relief with ActiFormCool®.