Meeting the challenges of community nursing

Community nursing is challenging at the moment. We, as practitioners, need to ensure that our patients have access to the right care at the right time. NHS England’s (2017) ‘Betty’s story’ highlighted differences within care delivery. However, the ‘Leading Change, Adding Value’ framework aims to reduce variations in practice, thus improving patient outcomes as well as enabling financial advantages (NHS England, 2016).

Guest et al (2015) highlighted that chronic wounds impose a significant burden on the NHS. The study identified that there were approximately 2.2 million patients living with a chronic wound in the UK, at an estimated total cost of £4.5–5.1 billion. The majority of these patients were treated in the community. Furthermore, less than 50% of chronic wounds healed within the study year — the common linking factor being inadequate assessment and lack of diagnosis.

The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN, 2010) outlined that assessment, which should take place within four weeks of presentation (and three monthly thereafter), should include clinical history and ankle brachial pressure index (ABPI) measurement to exclude arterial insufficiency. However, clinicians frequently cite that they are unable to meet the guidance to obtain and perform ABPI readings due to skill mix and time. Clare Mechen’s article discusses why holistic assessment is so important and looks at the MESI ABPI MD device (medi UK), which can calculate an accurate ABPI in under a minute with no resting time, and how this can help clinicians in their day-to-day practice and enable patients to be started on the correct treatment pathway in a timely fashion (pp. 4–9).

This supplement also looks at the importance of wound debridement as an essential element of wound bed preparation and why this should be performed on an ongoing basis (pp. 10–15), as well as the management of chronic oedema (pp. 17–22).

I hope that you enjoy this supplement, which provides useful education on complex and challenging conditions.

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