

**LIVE**

**WEDNESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 7:30PM**

# Addressing Skin Tone Bias in Wound Care: A Practical Guide

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JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY NURSING  
**JCN**

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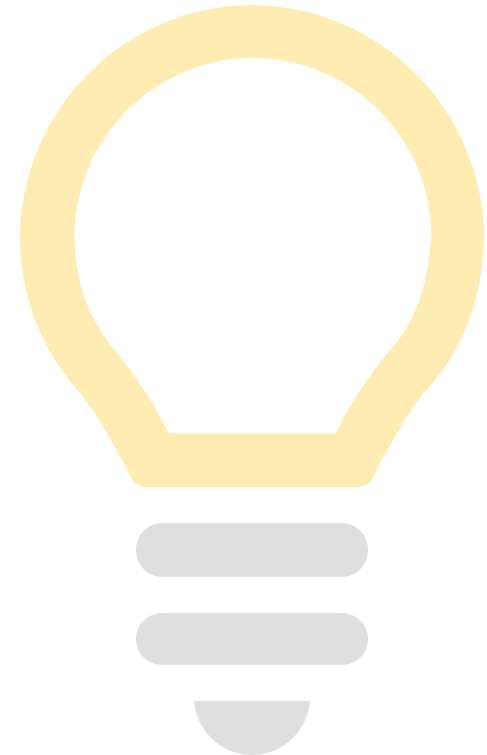
# LIVE Q&A

*SEND IN YOUR QUESTIONS BY COMMENTING  
ON THE VIDEO*

# OBJECTIVES OF TODAY'S SESSION

## WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

- Understand how skin tone bias impacts wound care
- Learn from real-world examples
- Explore tools such as the skin tone wheel
- Gain practical ways to implement best practice.



# WHY THIS TOPIC MATTERS

- Skin tone bias leads to missed or delayed diagnosis
- Disparities in wound care outcomes persist
- Aligns with NHS Core20PLUS5 and Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) goals.



A turning point  
in prevention

# WHAT IS SKIN TONE BIAS IN WOUND CARE?

1

Unconscious or systemic tendency to miss or mislabel changes in darker skin

2

Reliance on redness excludes patients

3

Impacts pain recognition, treatment, outcomes.



# REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES OF BIAS

## CASE EXAMPLE

- Pressure ulcer missed in type 7B skin tone – only noted when skin fully broken
- Patient quote: ‘they didn’t believe me – because they couldn’t see anything’.



# CONSEQUENCES OF SKIN TONE BIAS



## **Delayed diagnosis and treatment**

Leading to worsened wound outcomes, increased risk of infection, and prolonged healing times



## **Suboptimal treatment selection**

Selecting inappropriate treatment, resulting in ineffective treatment outcomes and prolonged suffering



## **Poor healing outcomes**

Patient experiencing higher rates of wound complications, chronicity and recurrence compared to patients with lighter skin tones.

# CONSEQUENCES OF SKIN TONE BIAS



## **Reduced patient satisfaction and trust**

Patients experiencing decreased satisfaction will be reluctant to seek further care or follow treatment recommendations, exacerbating health disparities



## **Ethical and legal implications**

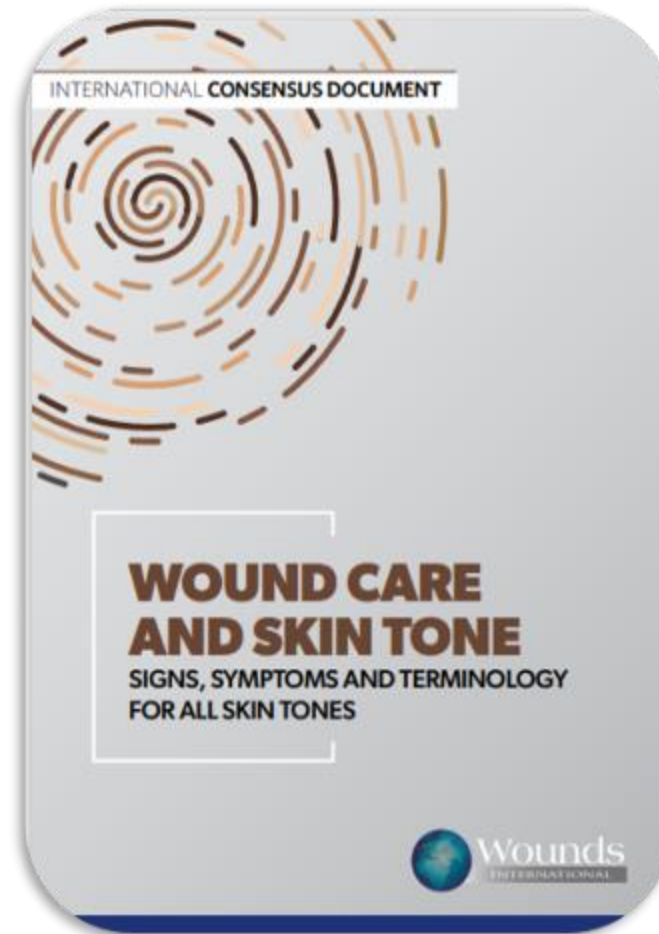
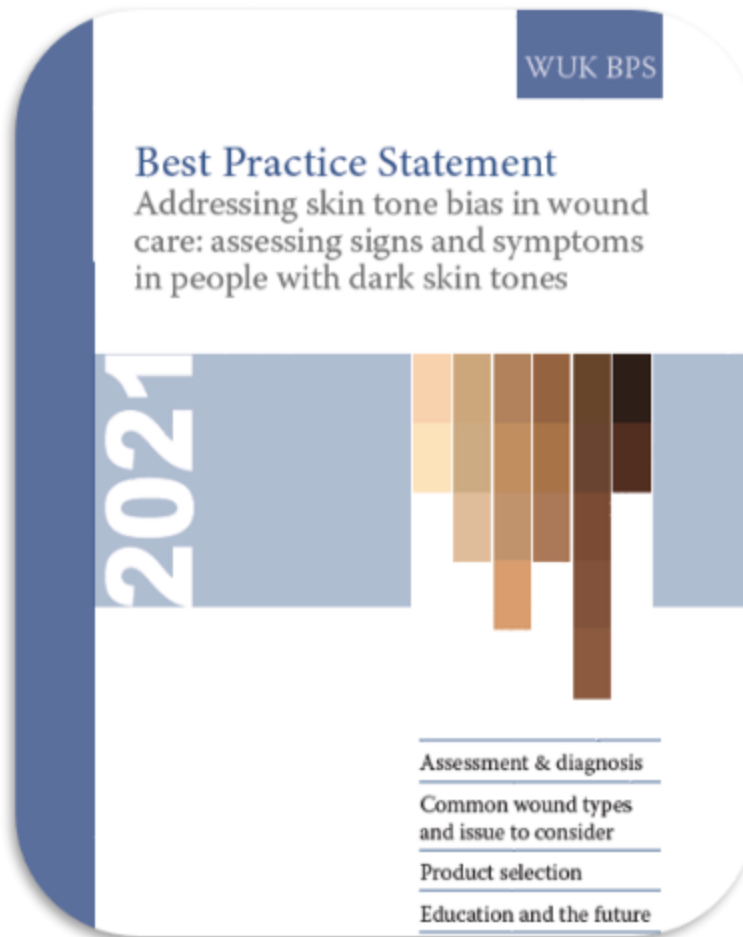
Increase in complaints, allegations of malpractice against healthcare providers and institutions for poor practices.



# INTRODUCTION TO THE BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT (BPS)

- Endorsed by clinical experts
- Based on patient input and case evidence
- Available online: [Addressing skin tone bias in wound care: assessing signs and symptoms in people with dark skin tones – Wounds UK](#)
- [Wound care and skin tone: Signs, symptoms and terminology for all skin tones – Wounds International](#)

# DOCUMENTS





## Skin tone in the management of incontinence-associated dermatitis

Luxmi Dhoonmoon

This article is based on published research, together with the practical experience of healthcare professionals at the Complex Wound Clinic in North West London. The aim is to highlight the importance of considering skin tone when managing IAD.

[View article](#)

## The relevance of skin tones in the diabetic foot

Luxmi Dhoonmoon

Wound Care and Skin Tone

made easy



Pressure ulcers and skin tone

made easy



Skin tears and skin tone

made easy



# KEY BPS RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Avoid relying solely on redness
- 2 Use warmth, texture, swelling, pain
- 3 Incorporate diverse reference images
- 4 Document what you feel, not just what you see
- 5 Use your 'touch' and 'feel'.

# PROGRESS SINCE BPS

- National webinars and podcasts
- Inclusion in training packs
- Pilots across NHS trusts with outcome audits:

**2022**

- 'Red legs' (51%)
- Cellulitis (48%)
- PUs (48%)
- Wound infection (39%)
- Moisture-associated skin damage (31%).

**2025**

Participants stated accurately recognising 'skin colour changes' was the most common challenge.



# WHY IS SKIN TONE AWARENESS IMPORTANT?



Skin Tone Assessment Tool					
	A	B	C	D	E
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

www.skintonetool.com

Assessment should include awareness of skin tone in order to monitor any changes in the patient's skin





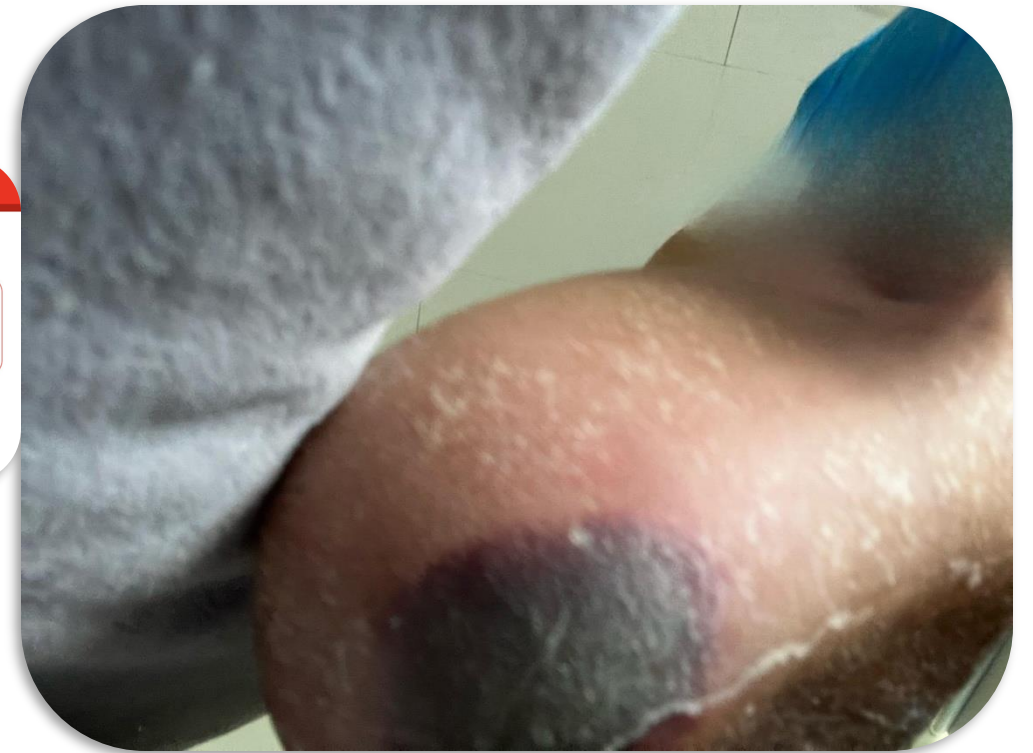
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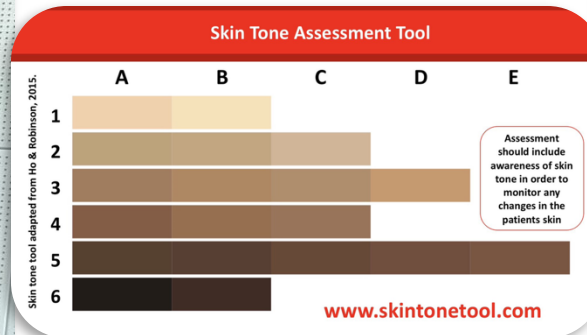
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# WHY IS SKIN TONE AWARENESS IMPORTANT?



# INTRODUCING THE SKIN TONE WHEEL

- Reference tool for recognising skin tone and changes accurately
- Supports consistent assessment language
- Not describing skin tone using food similes.

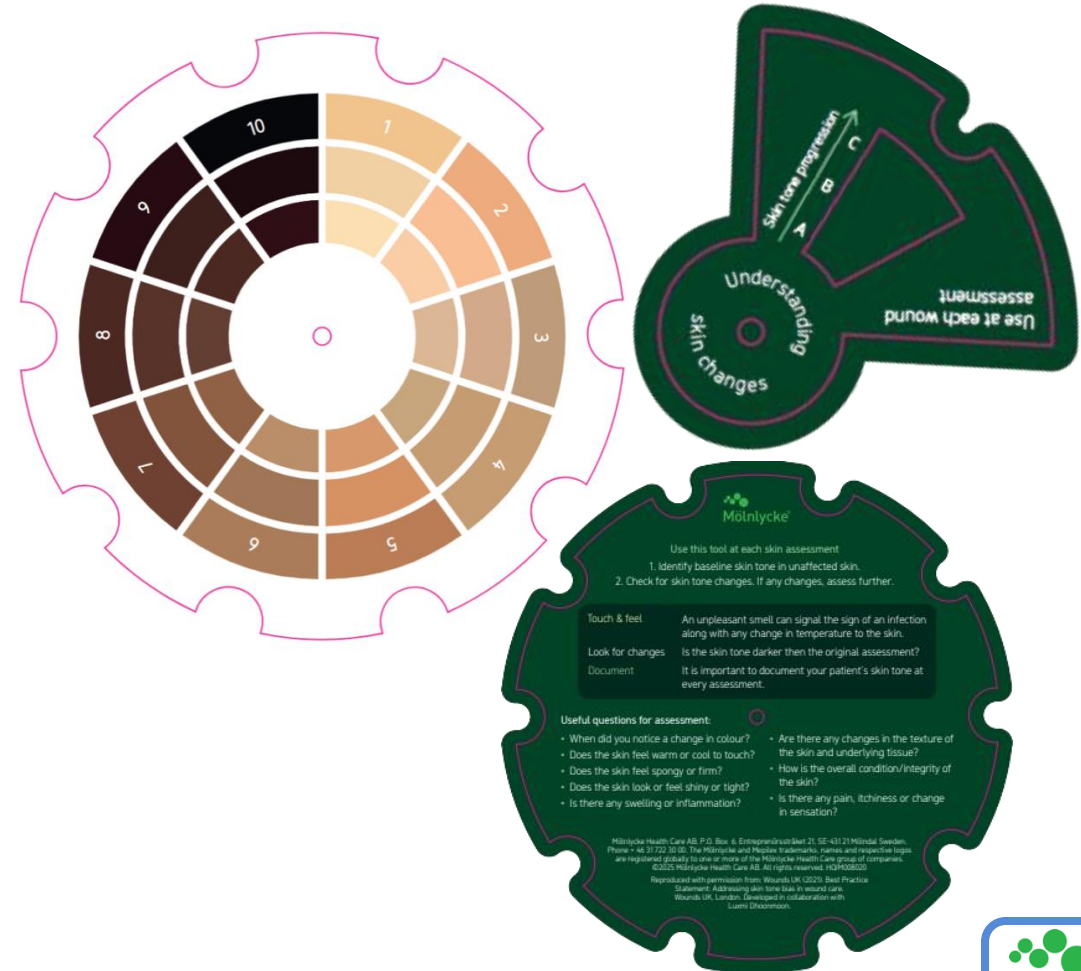


## AIM:

To embed in our daily routine for skin assessment.



# SKIN TONE WHEEL



# IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE

- Training 500+ staff
- Skin tone tool in all clinical areas
- Pre- and post-audit results
- Cross-discipline engagement: tissue viability nurses (TVNs), allied health professionals (AHPs), practice development, equality, diversion and inclusion (EDI).



# VIDEO OF TOOL IN PRACTICE





# OUTCOME

The tool empowered staff and improved patient care by making assessments more accurate, consistent, and equitable.

## Improved patient experience

- Patients with darker skin tones feel more **comfortable** and **safer** thanks to more accurate assessments
- Early detection meant fewer advanced ulcers, preserving **dignity, comfort, and wellbeing**.

## Better support for staff

- **67% rise in staff confidence** assessing darker skin tones after training<sup>1</sup>
- Reduced reliance on subjective judgement led to **more consistent care and fewer missed cases**
- Staff described the tool as '**clear, helpful, and confidence-boosting**' leading to less anxiety and greater clarity in decision-making.

# TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR CLINICIANS

- Skin tone wheel
- Venous leg ulcer patient guide
- Goal setting pad
- Webinars, e-learning, podcasts
- 'Awareness of skin tone in wound infection':

[https://open.spotify.com/episode/1KnIDY6a8gquvmRa98IgXY?si=mi\\_WPgboSY S9NGwEntEvvQ](https://open.spotify.com/episode/1KnIDY6a8gquvmRa98IgXY?si=mi_WPgboSY S9NGwEntEvvQ)



# TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR CLINICIANS

Access free, easy-to-use tools and resources today.

## Patient goal tracker

Help your patient take control of their progress by setting clear, achievable goals and tracking their daily habits.



# HOW TO USE THESE TOOLS IN PRACTICE



**Include in skin assessments and safety huddles**



**Discuss self-care goals with patients using the pad**



**Refer to skin tone wheel when documenting**



**Embed in e-learning / continuing professional development (CPD).**

# CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Recognise and address skin tone bias
- 2 Apply BPS best practice
- 3 Confidently use inclusive tools like the skin tone wheel
- 4 Download and share patient-centred guides.

# INTRODUCING WOUND CARE FOR ALL™

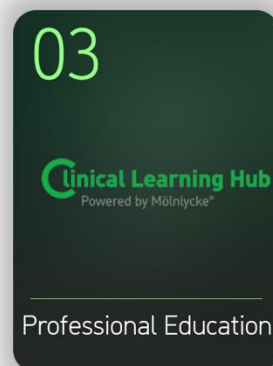
Clinician and Patient resources



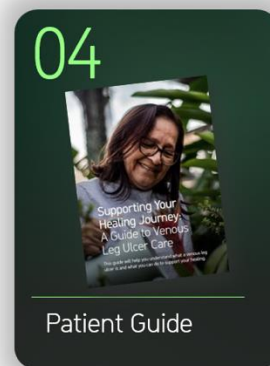
Skin tone wheel



Patient Goal tracker



Professional Education



Patient Guide

Scan the QR to access





# THANK YOU

- Thank you for joining this important conversation
- Let's continue working together to make wound care equitable for all.



# DOWNLOAD YOUR CERTIFICATE

## DOWNLOAD YOUR CERTIFICATE

Thank you for joining us, we hope to see you during our next live event!

To receive your certificate of attendance for please fill in the form below.



### Name \*

First name

Surname

### Email \*

Enter Email

Confirm Email

Phone number

### City & Post Code \*

City

ZIP / Postal Code

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