

The World of Woundcare

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As we move towards Brexit, the political landscape has changed yet again, with the Conservatives holding onto power, but by less of a margin than they had hoped. There is a lot of discussion around the 'right way' to do things. Whether we receive our information via the more traditional news outlets, or through one or more of the many forms of social media, it feels as though we are all more aware of the political challenges and debates than ever before. At my local annual tissue viability conference many nurses said they were increasingly aware of how these international and national decisions are affecting the care they give and had observed that their patients and carers were too.

The integration of health and social care provision is something we as nurses are becoming increasingly aware of, and while funding for the NHS has been protected, social care has not. This may result in fragmentation and inconsistent care, delayed discharges and thus delayed planned surgery and admissions.

In addition to the shortage of social care staff there is concern within the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) (NMC, 2016; RCN, 2016; Siddique, 2017) about the current nursing staff shortage. Following last year's decision to leave the European Union, many nurses have returned to their native European countries (Siddique, 2017) and 96% fewer nurses from the EU are applying (just 46 in April 2017 compared with 1304 in April 2016) (Siddique, 2017) as well as fewer people applying to complete their nurse training following the introduction of university fees for all nurse graduates. The decisions that are made will have an impact strategically, clinically and financially. Doing the 'right thing', however, is difficult to define.

Short-term planning, cuts to training places and the increasing number of nurses due to retire in the near future have all been exacerbated by the recent Brexit discussions that have led to European staff leaving the NHS (NMC, 2017). Demonstrating quality has been key for many years and with fewer nurses there is an increasing emphasis on achieving clinical and financial outcomes.

There is an increasing emphasis on prevention as well as treatment. The focus on pressure ulcer prevention

and increasingly incontinence-associated dermatitis and implementation of the wound CQIN (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation) (NHS England, 2016), which explores assessment and treatment, demand that nurses are fully engaged in high-quality tissue viability care. This is important if we are to prevent the development of chronic wounds. The cost implications of chronic wound care in the NHS are between £4.5 and £5.1 billion a year (Guest et al, 2015).

Something else to consider is the increased risk of infection with the delayed healing of a wound. Wound infection can lead to sepsis, which affects 123 000 people per year with 37 000 dying from it annually (NHS Choices, 2017) Keith Cutting has offered an overview in his editorial on page S4 and Professor Richard White will present on sepsis at the forthcoming WCAUK conference in Chester on Thursday 12 October 2017. Further details can be found at <https://www.wcauk.org/conferences/wcauk-conferences>.

The WCAUK will also be at Wound Expo (<http://www.woundexpo.com/>), the free event for TVNs in Liverpool, and WCAUK trustees are always happy to discuss tissue viability with you, whether it is political, strategic or of course clinical.

We hope to see you there!

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Article published in British Journal of Nursing 2017, Vol 26 No 15, Tissue Viability Supplement