

WHAT IS BEST PRACTICE IN HOME CARE WOUND CARE?

Georgina Gethin

Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, RCSI (Dublin, Ireland).

Best practice is context related and is influenced by many factors including the organisation of care structures, local resources, availability of expertise, education and training of healthcare professionals and patient understanding and treatment goals. This presentation will review the evidence around best practice in home care and seek to determine how it is defined and evaluated.

Clinical pathways can enhance best practice and improve the quality of care, reduce risks, increase patient satisfaction and increase the efficiency in the use of resources. These pathways should state the goals and key elements of care based on evidence based practice guidelines and patient expectations by facilitating communication, documentation of care provided, co-coordinating roles and sequencing the activities of the multidisciplinary team, patients and their relatives.

Development of interpersonal relationships in the homecare setting is enhanced by clinical pathways and can have a direct impact on quality of care. However, patients receiving home care visits have recorded up to 7 visits per day from a range of personnel and up to 35 different individuals visiting them over a 4-week period. Consequently, low levels of interpersonal continuity have been reported.

A key member of the multidisciplinary team is the informal carer, usually a family member. It is time to take note and investigate what mechanism of training, education and support can be provided to such individuals in order to maximise their input and improve patient outcomes and provide best practice.