

Barcelona's Declaration on the Care of People with Wounds

Acute, chronic wounds (e.g. pressure, friction and moisture associated injuries), lower limb ulcers, diabetic foot wounds, complications in surgical wounds, incontinence-associated dermatitis, skin tears, burns, ostomies, neoplastic and palliative wounds and cutaneous ulcers of all origins currently constitute a significant health problem. This is having a significant impact on the quality of life of those who experience these wounds and ulcers, their caregivers, their families and their communities. This issue affects all levels of healthcare (primary care, acute hospital and inpatient care and long-term care) and health care provided in social care facilities.

Wounds are an increasing concern due to an ageing population, higher dependency, and the rise in chronic conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. These factors along with deficiencies in health care systems can contribute to more complex wounds, suffering and poorer outcomes highlighting the need for effective prevention and treatment approaches.

For this reason, the undersigned Scientific Societies, in the context of the 35th Congress of the European Wound Management Association (EWMA) and the 15th National Symposium of the Grupo Nacional para el estudio y Asesoramiento en Úlceras por Presión y Heridas crónicas (GNEAUPP) in collaboration with the Sociedad Española de Heridas (SEHER) in Barcelona, wish to publicly declare that:

- Access to quality and evidence-based wound care is a basic human right, essential for preserving dignity, health, and quality of life. A lack of evidence-based wound care can cause significant variations in health outcomes. Every individual deserves timely, effective wound care to prevent suffering and promote healing.
- The care of wounds is a universal right that must be applied to everyone, regardless of age, health status, economic level, or social condition and must be firmly and effectively ensured for the most vulnerable, both in public healthcare settings and private facilities.
- This comprehensive care must be provided by transdisciplinary teams with patients, their caregivers and their communities at the centre of care.
- Care for individuals with wounds must be grounded in the best available evidence, ensuring that the practice of healthcare professionals and institutions rely on the most robust, up-to-date scientific knowledge.
- People with wounds and their caregivers must receive adequate information about the condition and prognosis of their wounds and the various treatment options, allowing them to fully participate in prevention or treatment plans, with their decisions aligned with their preferences and beliefs.

In relation to wound care, governments, health authorities, care providers and healthcare institutions must:

- Ensure at all levels of care, and for all users, universal wound care coverage, both the provision of quality care for uncomplicated wounds and the establishment of transdisciplinary units specialised in the care of complex wounds, ensuring temporal and organisational continuity of care and adapting coverage to the specific needs of each geographical area.
- Provide the correct provision of materials and technologies and ensure an organisation of care for optimal prevention and treatment for people with wounds. The provision of material and organisational resources for the preventive, diagnostic and curative care of wounds must be based, across all health systems, on equity and an appropriate balance between clinical evidence and cost, with the goal of achieving the greatest clinical effectiveness and the most significant health and quality of life benefits for patients.
- Establish and provide information systems that support the continuity and the analysis of care quality outcomes for all wounds, epidemiological measurement of various wound aetiologies, and ensure that those considered avoidable or preventable are included with clearly defined objectives and goals in the Patient Safety policies.
- Provide educational programmes for all healthcare professionals on the prevention, assessment and management of wounds, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, thus ensuring adequate training of professionals throughout their careers.

Given the continuous advancement in the science of caring for people with wounds, we urge authorities to prioritise the care of people with wounds at all levels: European, national, regional and local, establishing real and concrete measures and policies aimed at promoting and improving the overall health of people with or at risk of developing wounds. To this end, dedicated structures and budgets must be allocated to support research and innovation in this essential area of health care.

Barcelona, March 26th 2025

Signed in connection with the EWMA-GNEAUPP 2025 Conference, held in Barcelona, Spain, 26-28 March 2025, by:

EWMA President, Kirsi Isoherranen

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SEHER President, Daniel Chaverri Fierro