

SELF-CARE: TENDING TO ONE'S OWN WOUNDS, AKONOLINGA (CAMEROUN) CHRONIC WOUNDCARE CENTRE EXPERIENCE

Jeanine Mfoumou (1), Marie Thérèse Ngo Nsoga (1), Raoul Mvondo (2) Joanne Cyr (3), Hubert Vuagnat (4)

INTRODUCTION

- Self-care for wound dressings seems fully justified both due to the distance to the next health center and to diminish the hospital length of stay.
- This concept was initiated in 2014 at Akonolinga (Cameroon) Centre for Chronic Wounds.
- The objective was to capacitate the patient to proceed at home, himself to his dressings.

OBJECTIVES

- Explain and teach to the patient and/or family the basic hygiene measures to respect both before, during and after the dressing
- Show and teach how to prepare the dressing materials
- Describe and teach how to take the dressing off, clean the wound and apply a new dressing.
- Show and teach how to dispose hygienically of the waste material.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Supplies

- Buckets (clean and dirty), cup, chair, table, clean water, soap, vaseline (or equivalent), dry gauze, disinfectant if really needed, adhesive tape, crepe bandage roll, banana leaves.

Patients selection

- Those living more than 6 kilometers from a health center.
- Those treated at Akonolinga's district hospital and with lesions less than 5 centimeters across.

GETTING READY

- Identify the right spot
- Calm, clean and well lighted
- Wash hands
- Rinse hand with clean water, make soap foam, rinse with clean water.
- Always rinse over a second bucket (dirty)
- **Dispose the needed supplies**
- Clean on one side, dirty on the other



WOUND CARE

- Wash hands.
- Wash the wound with water, at that stage disinfection is usually not needed.
- Dry by dabbing the wound edges only with gauze.



WOUND DRESSING

- Apply the moist dressing and hold with adhesive tape, hold and protect with a bandage beginning distal to proximal.



WASTE DISPOSAL

- Waste must be disposed cleanly of, in the latrines or, if possible, burned.
- Finish by a hand wash.

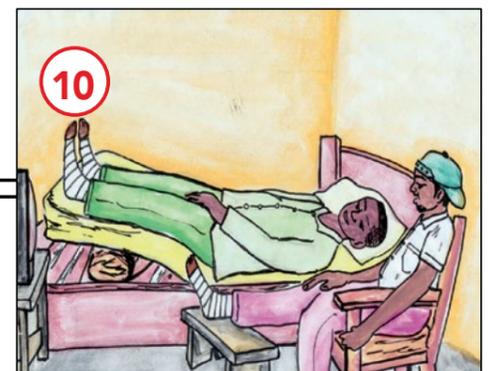


DISABILITY PREVENTION

- Normal woundhealing will cause retraction that will interfere with mobility.
- The wounds can lead to edema.



- Both must be prevented and/or cured by frequent movements and positioning taught by health professionals.



SCAR CARE

- Scars remain a fragile tissue for years. Thus they have to be taken care of (daily massage with oil) and protected from physical trauma (padding, sock).

FOLLOW UP & ALERT SIGNS

- **Plan** regular appointments at the health center or hospital.
- **Teach** to come sooner if there is: pain or swelling increase, necrosis, fever, more, pus...

CONCLUSIONS

SELF CARE SHOULD PROVE EFFICIENT BOTH TO LIMIT PATIENTS LENGTH OF STAY AND TO PROMOTE THEIR SOCIAL INSERTION

Special thanks:
Akonolinga's Centre for Chronic Wounds, Cameroon.
Geneva University Hospitals Centre for Wounds and Woundhealing, <http://plaies-cicatrisation.hug-ge.ch/>, Swiss Association for Woundcare www.safw-romande.ch, Médecins sans Frontières, Suisse, www.msf.ch, World Alliance for Wound and Lymphedema Care www.wawlc.org
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