

MEDIA RELEASE

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New technique helps team heal long lasting wounds

A project developed in Leicestershire to heal long term wounds has been highly commended in a set of international awards.

It was beaten only by entries from the USA and Austria in the Journal of Wound Care awards.

It is the second time in three years that the tissue viability team from Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust have been shortlisted for the awards. There are just eight people in the team.

The project – or pathway – was developed by LPT's Anita Kilroy-Findley with implementation led by Vicky Forknall with medical supplies company B Braun and L&R Healthcare. It centres on wounds that have failed to heal with traditional healthcare. These can include surgical wounds, foot injuries for people with diabetes and pressure sores or ulcers, but most are leg ulcers in older people.



The pathway follows recent research on wounds that fail to heal. It was discovered that in certain circumstances a low-level bacterial infection called a biofilm formed over the wound, creating a covering that was impenetrable to conventional dressings and immune to medication.

The pathway involves physically removing unhealthy tissue (the biofilm), and antimicrobial dressings.

One patient the team worked with successfully was John Hill, 78, of Thurnby, Leicestershire, who had painful leg ulcers. Before the treatment, he avoided visiting his grandchildren in case they bumped into his painful wounds, and kept away from other social gatherings because of the smell from the open sores.



He said: “I was reluctant to go and visit people. When I went to visit my grandchildren I was putting cling film around my legs to try to stop the smell getting out.

“I was thinking amputation would be a better option than carrying on – that’s how bad it was.”

Mr Hill was told a new procedure was available which might improve his situation, but it would involve some pain.

“I said it can’t be any more painful, let’s do it.

“The smell soon went, and I’m more mobile again. It’s like a huge weight lifted off my shoulders.”

Another patient was a woman in her fifties. Before treatment, she was taking pain killers constantly which were making her drowsy.

She said: “I have virtually no pain now. The smell is gone and my leg doesn’t leak anymore, it’s nearly healed, I’m able to go out with my dog now and I’m not embarrassed when I see my friends.”

Anita Kilroy-Findley, clinical lead with LPT’s tissue viability team, said: “We have had patients with ulcers for five years and we have healed them in four months.

“The potential for it is massive.” Persistent wounds are believed to be costing the NHS nationally more than £4 billion a year.

Anita said she was pleasantly surprised when L&R Healthcare put the pair forward for the award: “When you hear companies say you are way ahead of other areas in the country, that’s great.”

She added: “I love my job, I have a passion for patient care.”

Tissue viability nurse Vicky said: “I love coming to work. The job satisfaction when you come away knowing you have helped someone and can see an improvement is amazing. It’s not just the healing, it is the impact you can have on their quality of life.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: www.leicspart.nhs.uk
2. Raising Health is our registered charity (number 1057361) which raises funds to support LPT's excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision, to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff. www.raisinghealth.org.uk .