

Classification of dressings: a framework adapted to the Wound Bed Preparation Paradigm

MGC Giaquinto-Cilliers ^{ID}

Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and Burns, Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital, South Africa
Corresponding author, email: mgjaquinto@ncpg.gov.za

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The wound dressings market in South Africa follows the worldwide growth of products, and healthcare practitioners must acquire knowledge of the basics of wound healing and wound bed preparation for a cost-effective indication of those products. Based on the Wound Bed Preparation (WBP) paradigm, the author suggests a framework comprising most of the products in the basic classification, which has been updated yearly for the Wound Healing Association of Southern Africa (WHASA).

Keywords: wound dressings, wound bed preparation, wound management, wound products

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Introduction

The market for wound dressings in South Africa is moderately competitive. Some major players and smaller companies launch new, branded products every year and some products change hands due to the sale of one company to another. The global projected growth of the advanced dressings market is 6.4% over six years in 2021.¹ Several

factors drive the increased need for efficient wound care, amongst them a demand for faster recovery of patients with wounds, the need for a shorter hospital stay, the rising incidence of chronic diseases that can result in wounds (diabetes, cancer, autoimmune diseases), and the expected increase in the number of surgical procedures.² Efficient wound care significantly reduces the cost of care as well as the burden of disease on healthcare facilities and improves patient outcomes.³

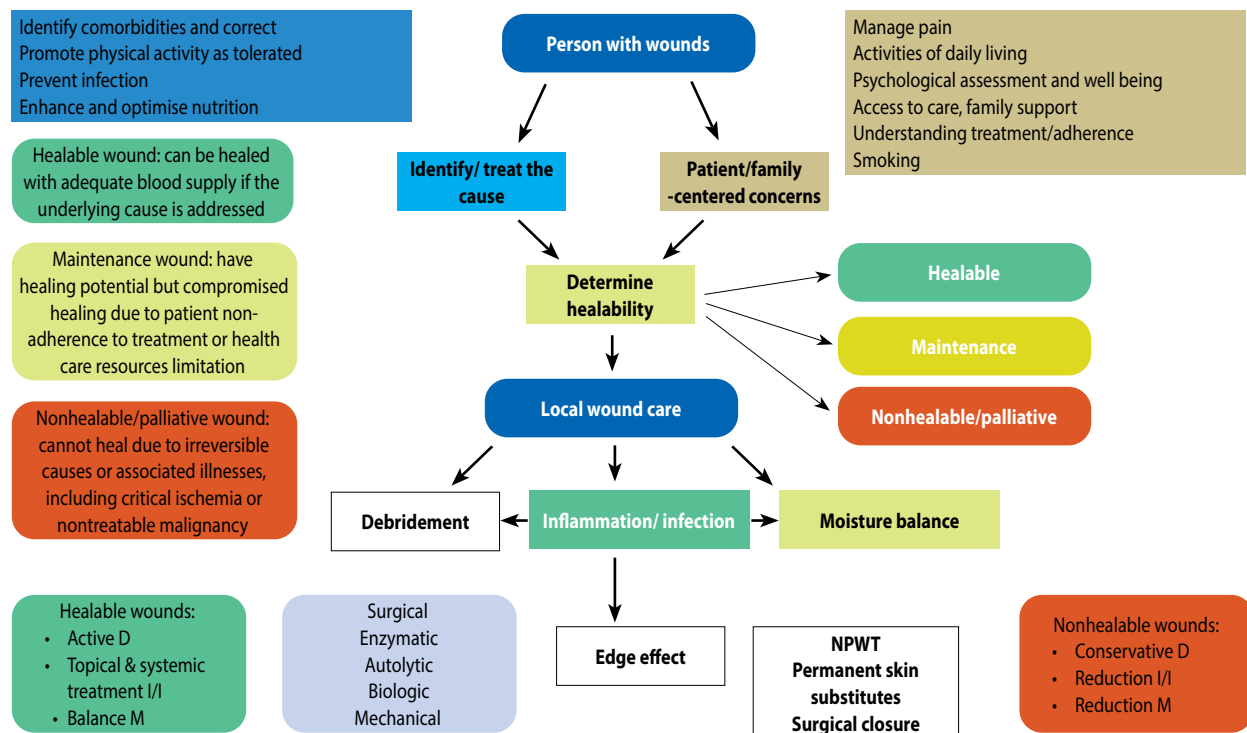


Figure 1: Adaptation of devitalised tissue, infection or inflammation, moisture balance, and edge preparation (DIME) wound bed preparation framework incorporating the concepts of healability and management of wounds accordingly^{4,7}

NPWT, negative pressure wound therapy.

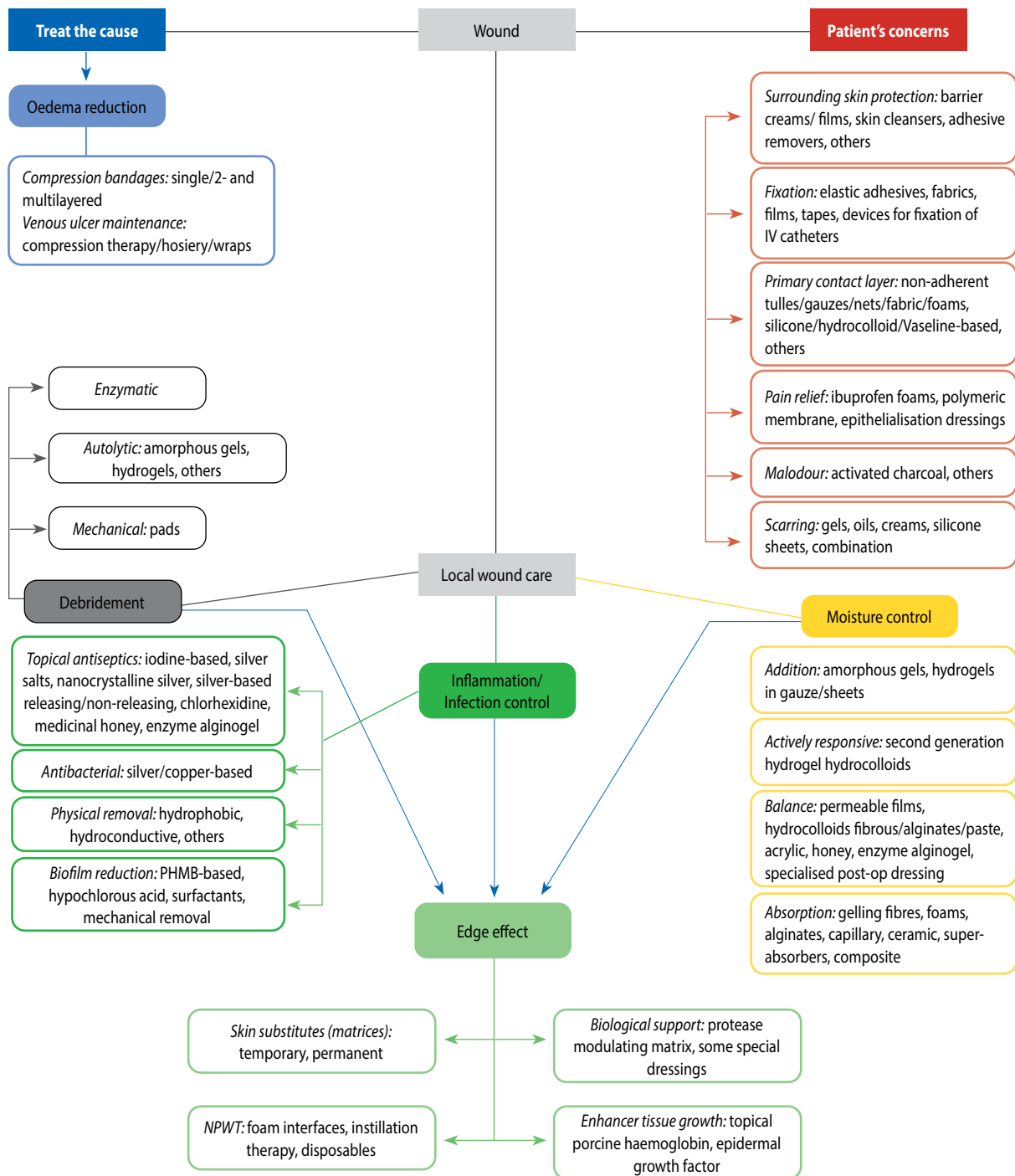


Figure 2: Classification of dressings adapted to the WBP framework^{4,7}
NPWT, negative pressure wound therapy.

With a variety of available dressings for healthcare professionals in South Africa, the decision to choose the ideal dressing to manage a patient presenting with wounds becomes a challenge. Treating clinicians and nurses should have a basic understanding of the processes of wound healing and wound bed preparation and choose the ideal, most cost-effective dressing to apply to the particular type of wound to be managed.⁴

Classification of dressings

Since 2016, the WHASA has updated the initial classification of dressings to adapt to the framework of the WBP, which is used for the

management of chronic wounds (Figure 1). First published in 2000 by Sibbald et al., the WBP framework had periodic updates in 2003, 2006, 2011, and 2021.⁵⁻⁹

The yearly updated classification has been available as a supplementary calendar to the November-December issue of the Wound Healing Southern Africa Journal. The classification accommodates most products available on the South African market, following the WBP framework. More than 1 000 products are included in the original printed version and the diversity of products can confuse professionals not trained in wound management. The choice is even more confusing due to products listed in more than one category, hence the need for a

good understanding of the properties of the product/dressing to adapt to the needs of the wound at the time of assessment.

The framework of dressings based on the WBP

The proposed framework is depicted in Figure 2 and takes into consideration the main property of any product described, without listing the brand name. Once the wound assessment is performed, the wound practitioner or specialist can consult the framework to find the best option for the assessed wound. Respecting the order of primary dressing for the most featured problem to be addressed (e.g. inflammation/infection), the addition of a second layer of dressing may be chosen to address other problems (e.g. excess of exudate); if a dressing has properties to address both needs, it can be used as the sole dressing.

Discussion

The cost-effectiveness of wound management starts with a proper initial wound assessment.^{10,11} A proper dressing choice relies on knowledge of how to perform this assessment along with knowledge of the properties of the available dressings on the market and their indications.^{12,13} Professionals are also required to know when to keep the patient under their management and when to refer them to a multidisciplinary team to get proper advice; the aim is to offer the patient the best treatment in the shortest time possible, with the most cost-effective resources.¹⁴

Training in wound care is not formally available in the curriculum of most medical and nursing universities in the country and is only available in short or year-long extracurricular paid courses. Consequently, there is a need to make information on this topic more accessible, particularly considering that wounds are common in primary healthcare settings where non-specialists deal with wounds on a daily base.

Conclusion

A framework containing the main properties of the available dressings on the South African market based on the WBP framework is proposed to facilitate the choice of dressings for clinicians and nursing professionals.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

MGC Giaquinto-Cilliers  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9099-0305>

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