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Visit the Wounds UK website at <http://www.wounds-uk.com>

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—Editorial—

For many NHS staff the past few weeks may have seemed a little unreal, to put it mildly. As a result of hospitals failing to reduce overspends there has been the need for large scale job cuts across the board. The RCN estimates that as many as 23,000 NHS jobs may be at risk. This has sent a message to many staff in the NHS, who at one time may have felt their job was for life.

A worrying trend in all of this is the apparent lack of appreciation for the role of the specialist nurse. Tissue viability nurses and other specialists are finding that increasingly they are the target for such staff cuts. It would appear that nurse specialists are an easy target.

There are of course, shallow financial reasons which may lead to a reduction in specialist nurse provision. Another potential reason for this could be that there is a lack of clarity in the role of the tissue viability nurse and that TVNs in different areas have similar but not exactly matching roles. I first found this out when I became a TVN in 1997. Part of my role was to visit the TVNs in Scotland and find out what each one was doing. The core of the role in each case was similar but there were individuals who had different areas of interest which led to a variety of approaches, none of which were 'wrong' but just different. Whilst I think that such individualism should be celebrated, there may be other who fail to understand the need for this approach.

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Agenda for change has also proved problematic for many nurse specialists, with many posts achieving only level 6. This is scant reward for the dedication and commitment involved in practising at this level.

The role of the specialist nurse could again be undermined when the NMC decides on the development of the Advanced Nurse Practitioner, this will be a registerable qualification which should be supported by Masters level education (still for debate).

So what can be done to address this apparent erosion of the nurse specialist roles?

One of the key messages which emerges from the recent events is that we need to ensure that we can communicate what we do to others. This has been an issue in nursing for many years and one which is far from resolved. We must ensure that our role within our organisation is, without question, one which is pivotal to offering high quality evidence based specialist nursing care, as well as education, training, research and audit. We must ensure that we are not viewed as a soft target and that without nurse specialists, quality will diminish and costs will spiral. In one area of central Scotland, the TVN post at a large Hospital was axed and within weeks the Community staff were noticing an increase in the number of stage four pressure ulcers. This is a major issue not just for staff, but for patients, families and for the government.

We must also be able to offer hard facts regarding what we do on a daily basis.

Using databases to record patient details, treatment regimes and monitor wound progress is

another way to ensure that this rich source of information is there to support our many and varied roles.

If you do not have access to a database at present, you might want to use the Wounds-UK software which uses the Applied Wound Management framework to record the patient details.

To have a free software package sent out, contact Vi Guyan at Wounds UK.

John Timmons

Editor

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▾ **Actiform Cool Study Days**

Actiform Cool® hydrogel dressing has proven an effective method of pain management on many wound types acute and chronic. Activa is offering the following study days which Wounds-UK is supporting. The speakers are of an excellent calibre and the study days have proven hugely successful. To register, click on the Activa link on the Wounds-UK home page.

Sessions include:

- **Accurate Wound Assessment and its Role in Managing Pain Associated with Wounds**
- **Working in Partnership with the Patient**
- **Advancing Wound Dressing Technology**
- **second Generation Hydrogels: Clinical Data**
- **Effective Clinical Practice**

Speakers include:

- **Prof. Keith Harding**
- **Pauline Beldon**
- **Dr. Keith Moore**
- **Sylvie Hampton**
- **Deborah Hofman**
- **Trudie Young**

Actiform Cool® study days will take place across the country at the following venues:

Wednesday 10th May	Holiday Inn, Junc 7 M6 Chapel Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham
Friday 12th May	The Cambridge Belfrey, Cambourne, Cambridge
Tuesday 23rd May	Lumley Castle Hotel, Chester-le-Street, County Durham
Tuesday 6th June	Wetherby Racecourse, The Millennium Stand, York Road, Wetherby
Wednesday 14th June	The Hydro Hotel, Mount Road, Eastbourne

For more information, including the full programme and how to book, please see the [**Activa Study Days**](#) page within the conference section of the Wounds UK Website.

➤ **Wounds-UK Awards**

The countdown is on for the Wounds UK awards which will take place on the 9th June in the Imperial War Museum, Manchester. There was excellent interest in the awards which attracted submissions from all corners of the wound care world. The standard of submission was extremely high and the judges now begin the arduous task of finding winners in all the categories. There is also a special award for those seen as having made a major contribution to wound care.

➤ **EWMA set for successful conference**

The theme for the forthcoming [**EWMA conference**](#) is education in wound management. The conference begins on Thursday 18th May and will run until Saturday 20th. It is the first time that a conference of this size will focus solely on education and this demonstrates the importance of this as a key issue in the field of wound management.

➤ **The Smith & Nephew Foundation 2006 Nursing Research Awards**

The Smith and Nephew Foundation is looking for outstanding nurse researchers who will contribute to the evidence base for the nursing care of patients with skin or tissue damage and vulnerability.

The Foundation is offering:

- **A Doctoral Research Studentship worth up to £90k over 3 years**
- **A Post-doctoral Nursing Research Fellowship worth up to £120k over 3 years.**

The Smith and Nephew Foundation will be particularly interested to receive applications in the following areas:-

- **Factors which influence the physiological response to tissue damage**
- **The role of infection in delayed healing**
- **Factors which influence treatment decisions in skin/wound care**
- **The hidden costs of tissue damage**

Applications which focus on research in other areas of skin, tissue damage or vulnerability will also be considered.

The Doctoral Nursing Research Studentship will provide financial support for a nurse researcher with outstanding potential who is at the beginning of his/her research career.

The Post-doctoral Nursing Research Fellowship will provide financial support for a career nurse researcher and seeks to enhance nursing post-doctoral research capacity.

Applicants for both the above awards need to be supported by an established UK research team, based in a University School/Faculty or Department of Nursing, which has a proven track record of research and development in the field of skin or tissue damage and vulnerability.

The awards are open to members of the nursing and midwifery professions, working in the United Kingdom, who hold active registration with the Nursing & Midwifery Council. The closing date for applications is 5 May.

For more details please visit the Foundation Website:

www.snfoundation.org.uk

▼ **Latest references**

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