

P34

Evidencing your intervention – Measuring Time to Heal.

Joel Gurr, Royal Perth Hospital, Podiatry Department

Virginia Bower, Box X2213 GPO, Perth, Western Australia

A universally accepted principle in management is “what gets measured gets managed”, and health is no exception. With scarce resources available in the health system and the movement towards evidence based practice, departments are under increasing pressure to justify their expenditure in regards to outcomes and demonstrate their effectiveness. Against this backdrop the Podiatry Department implemented a system to record data in relation to all patients who attended the clinic with diabetic foot ulceration in either the High Risk Foot Clinic (HRFC) and the Multi-Disciplinary Foot Ulcer Clinic (MDFUC).

The primary goal was to measure the average number of days taken to heal a diabetic foot ulcer from initial presentation, and also the healing rate. For research purposes other variables such as type of ulcer site, offloading device, and the presence of osteomyelitis, soft tissue infection and peripheral arterial disease were also gathered.

Establishing a benchmark for the ‘time to heal’ of chronic diabetic foot ulcers proved difficult as there is little evidence in the literature providing expected healing rates. Consequently a conservative benchmark was set for the health service with a goal to achieve a 30% healing rate within a 12-week period of all wounds presenting within the same 12-week interval. It is recognised that the risk of osteomyelitis increases significantly in chronic foot wounds, which remain unhealed beyond 12 weeks.

The first twelve months of data has been analysed, showing 12-week healing rates of between approximately 35-45% depending on the quarter. The paper will also present data on the relationship between healing rates and the other variables collected, and the correlation between the healing rates of the HRFC and MDFUC will also be detailed. The relatively simple collection of data on healing rates by other health services would be a truly valuable exercise, as it would allow for institutions to benchmark their activities. In the absence of currently published data on healing rates this study provides a preliminary benchmark for diabetic foot wounds.