



**Wound care product availability for
patients in Finland
- controlled questionnaire study
2006-2007**

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Finnish Wound Care Society organised together with 14 universities of applied sciences a pre-tested questionnaire study

The aim was to collect information about the distribution of wound care and compression products for patients with chronic leg ulcer from municipalities/ health care centers in Finland



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Finnish Ministry of Social and Health Care in 1999:

Recommendation for the distribution of care products and help aids:

In Finland if the patient is seen by the GP and an individual need for wound care products can be detected

- the GP can decide the distribution in all cases

- FIRST principal is that the need of care products and help aids is done individually, based on holistic assessment.
- SECOND principal is that the need for care products and help aids is assessed to be long- lasting, generally over 3 months.
- THIRD principal is that health care centers distribute care products and help aids for patients free of charge.

(Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriön tiedote 12/99)



Previous studies

- **MS&HC in year 2000:** 81 % of the health care centers reported that they distribute some dressings for patients with pressure ulcer and leg ulcers.
- *” Some health care centers distribute also special wound care products (50 %) ja liquids (32 %). ”*
- *As a special attention it was mentioned that dressings are distributed for patients who have suffered from wounds for longer than 3 months”. (Selvitys terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskusten hoitoväline- ja hoitotarvikejakelustasekä kunnallisen terveydenhuollon maksukatosta. Monisteita. 2001)*
- **FWCS Questionnaire 2001: 50% of wound patients paid for their wound care products themselves and there was a great discrepancy among different municipalities.** (Hietanen & Iivanainen 2005).



- The aim of this questionnaire study was to find the facts about the distribution of wound care products to wound patients and compression therapy for venous leg ulcer patients in Finnish municipalities/health care centers



Data collection

- Pre- tested questionnaire with structured and open ended questions
- Conducted between April 2006 and April 2007 by student nurses from different parts of the country
- Methods
 - interviewing, phone interviewing, e-mail questionnaire
- Data analysis
 - SPSS 11.0 ja 13.0
 - content analysis of the qualitative data

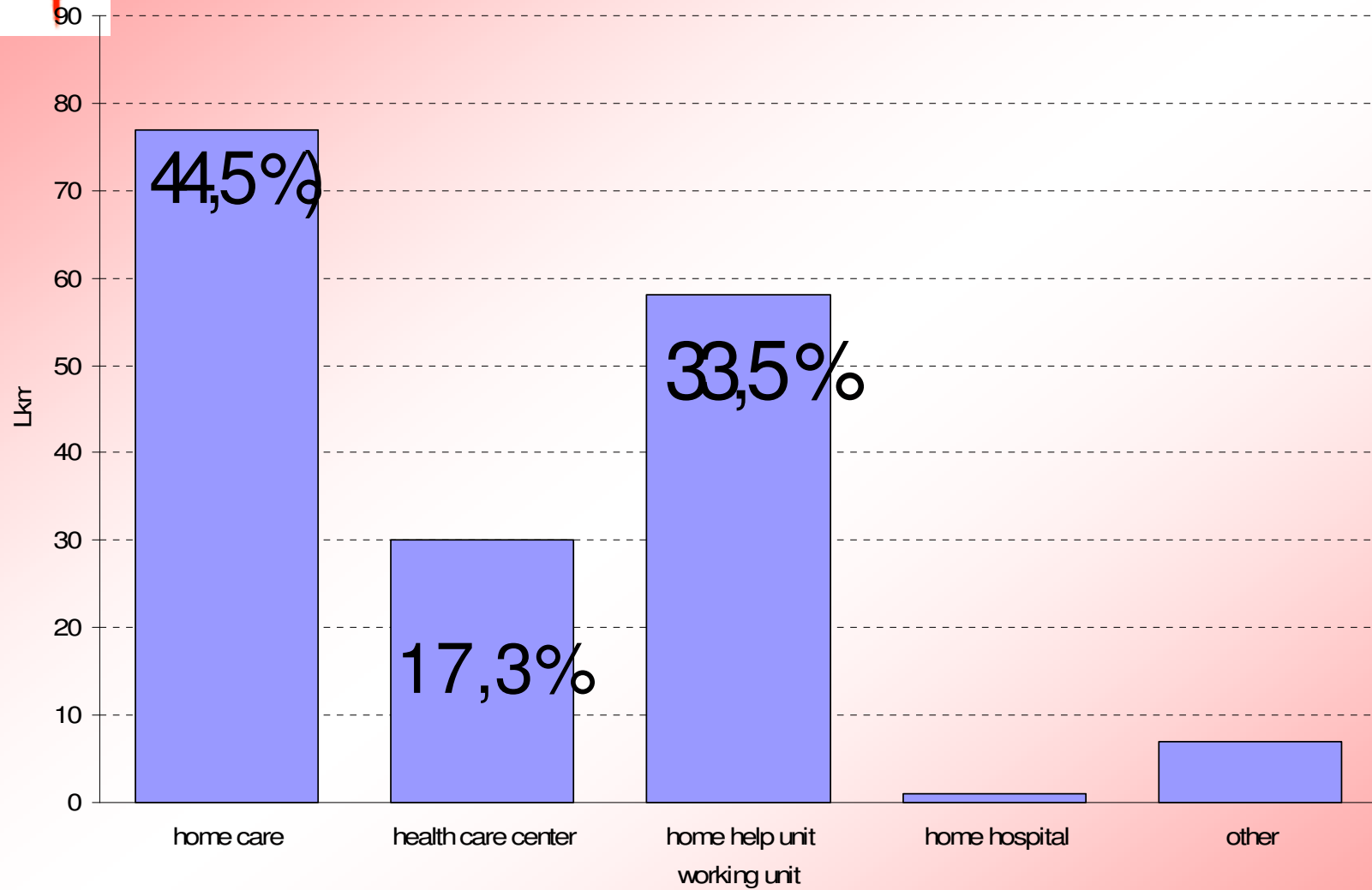


Results

- The data covered 162 municipalities, 39 % of all (416) municipalities in Finland (www.kunnat.net)
- The collected information covered 2 972 600 of total Finnish population (5 276 955 31.12.2006), which is 56 % (www.tilastokeskus.fi)
- The answers were received from 175 different units
- In 10 municipalities the answers were received from more than one unit. This data was united when analysed

A

Working unit (n =175)





Profession of the persons who answered the questionnaire

- 41,6 % RGN
- 33,5 % Public health nurse
- 9,8 % Ward sister
- 8,7 % Practical nurse
- 1,2 % TVN
- 5,2 % someone else (head nurse,
nurse director)



Table 1: Who plans the wound care (n=174)

Professional	f	%
GP and nurse together	66	37,9
Nurse	64	36,8
GP	32	18,5
TVN	6	3,4
Practical nurse	6	3,4
Total	174	100,0



Table 2. Free distribution of wound care products to the patient (n=171)

	f	%
A health care center provides some wound care products for the patients	75	44
A health care center provides a patient some wound care products based on the decision of a nurse.	36	21,1
A patient buys all wound care products by her/himself	27	15,6
A health care center provides a patient some wound care products based on the decision of a GP.	13	7,6
Home care unit provides to a patients wound care products	3	1,8
Home care unit provides a patient wound care products for 3 days.	17	9,9
Total	171	100,0



Table 3. Issues to be related to free distribution of wound care products

	Yes %	No %
Number of treatment (n=169)	3,0	80,5
Wound diagnosis (n=171)	9,9	71,9
Income of patient (n=165)	11,5	70,9



Time of ulceration related to free distribution of wound care products (n=170)

- 48,8 % reported that time of ulceration was related to free distribution of wound care products
- 36,6 % reported that the time limit for ulceration was 3 months
- only 15,9 % (27) reported that wound care products are distributed free to the wound patients from the beginning of the treatment and would continue until complete wound closure

4

What kind of wound care products are distributed free of charge to the patients?

- 20,6 % reported that only gauze and tapes were cost-free
- only 7 % (4) reported that **all wound care products** are distributed free of charge to the patients



Table 4. Defined problems of patients in the availability of wound care products (N=175).

	f	%
The wound care products are expensive	145	82,9
The product is not available in pharmacy	89	50,9
The patient is discharged so quickly that there is no time to get the wound care products	69	39,4
The local treatment of wound is changed.	64	36,6
A patient has to buy wound care products in large portions	50	28,6
3 months time limit of ulceration for free wound care products distribution.	43	24,6
There is no clear instructions of local treatment of wound	21	12,0
A patient does not know where to get the wound care products	19	10,9



Table 3. Free distribution of hosiery for venous leg ulcer patients (n=174).

	f	%
A patient gets hosiery free from the health care center.	36	20,7
A patient des not get hosiery free from the health care center in any situations.	96	55,2
A patient may get hosiery free from health care center in the special cases / for the specila reasons.	25	14,3
Unclear practice.	17	9,8
Total	174	100,00



Table 5. Distribution of bangages of compression therapy to venous leg ulcer patients (n=174).

	F	%
A patient gets compression bandages from the health care center.	70	40,2
A patient does not get the compression bandages from the health care center.	88	50,6
A patient get the compression bandages for the healtrh care center if her/ his case has been discussed in rehabilitation team and the team recommends this treatment.	2	1,1
Unclear practice.	14	8,1
Total	174	100,00



Conclusions

- These results describe the trend of free distribution of wound care products in Finland.
- The free distribution of wound care products from health care center varies and results in uneven patient care.
- The free distributed dressings were mainly gauze and tapes, not the modern wound care products.
- The time limit for free distribution of wound care products was 3 - (6)months, which is not supporting the effective wound management.
- The free distribution of compression therapy products for venous leg ulcer patients is not well implemented in Finland.



Recommendations by Finnish Wound Care Society:

1. Early diagnosis and care paths, which are decided by GP`s, who consult the specialists.
2. Modern local treatments combined with compression therapy or other assisting treatments
3. Free distribution of wound care products for all patients without any time limits.
4. The individual preventive care plan for the patient with chronic ulcers.
5. Defining of wound patients´ care path and criterias of good clinical practice in the municipalities, care distric areas and on nation wide level.



6. The continuing wound care education for health professionals
7. The critical analysis of cost of wound care focusing on the **total** costs
which includes also the care time and the healing time of ulcer not solely the costs of the wound care products



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