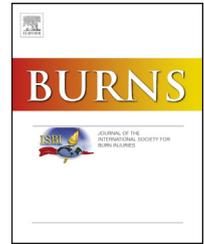


Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/burns

Letter to the Editor

NHS Five year forward plan- has it worked for burn injuries in the UK?



Dear Sir,

In October 2014, the National Health Service (NHS) published 'the five year forward view' describing how the public health service in the United Kingdom (UK) must change and adapt to meet the demands of an elderly population and managing patients surviving complex disease [1]. In addition the plan looks at how to streamline care and reduce costs to the NHS. Annually the NHS spends £1.1 billion managing common ailments including coughs and colds in emergency departments or general practitioner surgeries [2]. During this period there has been a greater drive nationally for the population to seek the attention of community pharmacists to receive treatment for what is broadly termed 'minor ailments'.

We are slowly coming to the end of this five year period yet in our experience there has been little improvement in the quality of burn care advice provided by pharmacists to patients with burn injuries. Many patients, particularly parents of children with burns are sold 'burn creams/ ointments' which are relatively expensive (£2-5) with no evidence of efficacy in wound healing other than providing a 'cooling analgesic effect' [3,4]. In our experience burn anti-septic ointments are provided by pharmacists for patients with a range of burns from erythema to full thickness burns. However they should only be applied to areas of intact skin (e.g. erythema) [5]. Burn ointments are typically used once or twice before the patient subsequently seeks further medical care from a hospital and the cream is discontinued.

In some cases the creams are continued which can have a deleterious effect on the patient's future burn care. Our recent concern relates to the use of Acriflex cream. It is a cream containing 0.25% chlorhexidine gluconate sold with the therapeutic indication for minor burns, scalds, sunburn and minor skin trauma e.g. scratches [6].

One paediatric patient recently sustained a 2% superficial partial thickness scald to their neck and chest with minimal first aid. The parents sought the help of a pharmacist who provided them with this product. Unfortunately with continued use this cream resulted in a hard deposit which became fixed and adherent to the underlying burnt skin, making it impossible to assess burn depth and additionally difficult to remove. The

patient required multiple dressing changes over the course of the week in order to lift off the deposit.

We feel that greater education is provided on burn assessment, triage and management to pharmacists by specialised burn care centres. This would improve triage in terms of patients who they are able to treat (e.g. small adult sunburns) and those that require referral to their local burn facility or centre. We feel that the five year forward project has done little to improve the triage or management of burn wounds. Instead a plan to involve community pharmacists in patient care is flawed if community pharmacists are not appropriately trained to triage burn wounds.

Conflict of interest

We submit our article in which both authors have no conflict of interests or financial interests. No funding was provided in the writing of this article.

REFERENCES

- [1] National Health Service 'Five year forward view'. 2014 October <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/5yfv-web.pdf>. [Accessed 07 March 2019].
- [2] NHS England: the vital role for pharmacists on the front line. 2015 January <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/5yfv-web.pdf>. [Accessed 07 March 2019].
- [3] Hyland EJ, Connolly SM, Fox JA, Harvey JG. Minor burn management: potions and lotions. *Austr Prescr* 2015;38: 124-7.
- [4] ANZBA Use of hydrogels consensus statement. 2012 May <http://anzba.org.au/assets/ANZBA-Use-of-hydrogels-consensus-statement-June-2012-2.pdf>. [Accessed 07 March 2019].
- [5] Bernard D, et al. Minor burns, sunburns and wounds. In: Berardi R, Newton G, McDermott JH, editors. *Handbook of nonprescription drugs*. 18th ed. Washington, DC: American Pharmacists Association; 2015.
- [6] Electronic Medicines Compendium (eMC). Acriflex 0.25%. <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/4877>. [Accessed 07 March 2019].

Karl Walsh*

Burns and Plastic Surgery Department, Royal Manchester Children's
Hospital, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9WL, United Kingdom

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: karl.walsh2@mft.nhs.uk (K. Walsh).

Samantha McNally

Burns and Plastic Surgery Department, University Hospital of South
Manchester, Southmoor Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M23 9LT,
United Kingdom

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.burns.2019.04.007>

© 2019 Published by Elsevier Ltd.