



Call for Comment on Draft National Clinical Practice Guideline on Prevention and Management of Venous Leg Ulcers

**Australian Wound Management Association
New Zealand Wound Care Society**

The Australian Wound Management Association (AWMA) in collaboration with the New Zealand Wound Care Society (NZWCS) have prepared draft Clinical Practice Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Venous Leg Ulcers. The guideline will be proposed for submission to the NHMRC for approval under section 14A of the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992.

The guideline presents a comprehensive review of the diagnosis, assessment, management and prevention of venous leg ulcers (VLUs) within the Australian and New Zealand healthcare context, based on the best available evidence.

In Australia, the prevalence of venous leg ulcers (VLUs) is 1% in the overall population¹ and approximately 4% in adults aged over 65 years.² Venous leg ulcers have a high rate of recurrence (approximately 56% recur within 3 months³), thereby increasing their health burden. In Australia it has been estimated that management of venous ulcers accounts for \$400 million annually in health care expenditure.¹ Aside from the direct financial burden of treating VLUs,¹ they give rise to chronic pain, reduced participation in the workforce and social life and an overall reduced quality of life for people inflicted.⁴

The guideline aims to increase awareness of VLUs in the community and to simplify clinical decision-making processes for health care professionals.

The guideline seeks to assist health professionals to:

- accurately diagnose and assess VLUs;
- optimise management and promote self-management;
- prevent or delay complications associated with VLUs;
- optimise quality of life; and
- reduce the risk of recurrence.

The guideline is intended for use in health care settings in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas of Australia and New Zealand. It will seek to address issues specific to special populations including:

- people living in rural and remote areas;
- people from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background;
- people from a Maori background; and
- people from ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

You are invited to make a submission to the Australian Wound Management Association and the New Zealand Wound Care Society on the draft guideline.

How to make a submission

You may make a submission in writing to:

Postal address:

Australian Wound Management Association
P. O Box 621
Woden, ACT 2606.

Fax: 02 – 6260 5240

Email: secretary@awma.com.au

The Chair of the Venous Leg Ulcer Guideline Committee is A/Professor David Hardman.

Closing date

Submissions must be received by COB **30th November 2010**.

Further information

A copy of the draft guideline can be obtained from: <http://www.awma.com.au/>
<http://www.nzwcs.org.nz/>

1. Baker, S. and Stacey, M., Epidemiology of chronic leg ulcers in Australia. Australia and New Zealand Journal of Surgery, 1994. **64**(4): p. 258-61.
2. London, N. and Donnelly, R., Abc of arterial and venous disease. Ulcerated lower limb. British Medical Journal, 2000. **320**(7249): p. 1589-91.
3. Nelzen, O.; Bergqvist, D. and Lindhagen, A., Long-term prognosis for patients with chronic leg ulcers: a prospective cohort study. European Journal of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, 1997. **13**(5): p. 500-8.
4. Persoon, A.; Heinen, M.; van der Vleuten, C.; de Rooij, M.; van de Kerkhof, P. and van Achterberg, T., Leg ulcers: a review of their impact on daily life. Journal of Clinical Nursing, 2004. **13**(3): p. 341-54.