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## UNDER PRESSURE: EFFECTS OF STANDARDIZATION OF COMPRESSION THERAPY IN VENOUS LEG ULCERS IN NURSING

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**Background:** Venous ulcers are the most common chronic wounds in the aging population. Compression therapy forms the cornerstone of venous leg ulcer treatment. There is strong evidence that it enhances leg ulcer healing rates and prevents recurrence. Nevertheless a discrepancy between evidence and practice exists. Literature reveals a lack of knowledge and skills of nurses regarding compression therapy as one of the key reasons.

**Aim:** To examine if a standard education package for community nurses regarding venous ulcer treatment, will lead to a more adequate subbandage pressure, a better performance of the ulcer, pain reduction and longer wearing of compression bandages.

**Method:** Based on literature and international guidelines an evidence-based education package was developed. Experts in wound care, doctors and community nurses were contacted to validate the education package through a Delphi-procedure. The training focuses both on knowledge and skills related to compression therapy. A group of community nurses will be trained using the standard education package. An other group of home care nurses will receive no additional education. The subbandage pressure, wound evolution, pain and compression wearing time of venous ulcer patients will be compared between both groups.

**Relevance:** Enhancing the knowledge and skills of nurses may result in a better quality of life of patients with a venous ulcer, a faster healing of the ulcer and may reduce the costs of long-term health care treatment.