

The Bluebelle Study: a feasibility study of complex, simple and absent wound dressings in elective and unplanned surgery

Development of outcome measures to assess practical wound management issues and patient experience

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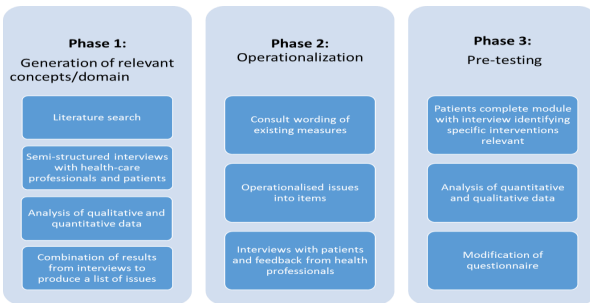
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Background

Context: A recent Cochrane systematic review reported that there was no evidence to suggest that any dressing significantly reduced the risk of developing a surgical site infection compared with no dressing. The review concluded that decision-making around dressings may need to be informed by costs and practical issues such as wound management, although highlighted a lack of meaningful outcome data on wound symptom management and patient experience of dressings.

Aim: To develop a measure for patient experience of wounds and their dressings, as well as management of wound symptoms.



Phase 1: Identify domains

Aim: Generate issues relevant to the selected group of patients.

Methods: An exhaustive list of potential issues were identified from a literature review of 26 randomised controlled trials and in-depth interviews with a purposeful sample of patients from five hospitals (15 men, 24 women).

Phase 2: Operationalisation

Aim: Construction of a provisional questionnaire.

Methods: The key concepts from these domains were then operationalised into statements. This was an interactive process, which was facilitated by feedback from health professionals, patients, the Bluebelle study management team and a Patient Involvement (PPI) group

Phase 3: Pre-test

Aim: Pre-testing the questionnaire for acceptability and relevance.

Methods: 28 individuals, a mix of patients and healthcare professionals, from two different hospitals completed the questionnaires as well as debriefing questions.

Results

The Wound Management Questionnaire is a 5-item measure to be completed by a healthcare professional and captures the practical aspects of wound management. The Wound Experience Questionnaire is a 12-item measure that captures the patient's experience of their wound and their satisfaction with having/not having a dressing. Given the range of dressings that are routinely available, specific versions of these questionnaires have been developed for the main types of dressing scenarios – standard adhesive dressings, tissues adhesive as a dressing and no dressing.

Discussion

Based on in-depth interviews and a literature search of existing outcome measures, two measures were developed to capture practical wound management issues and patient experience. These new measures are now ready for validation and psychometric testing.

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