



Effective Health Care

Venous Leg Ulcers

Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- The topic, *Venous Leg Ulcers*, was found to be addressed by an in process titled *Chronic Venous Ulcers: A Comparative Effectiveness Review of Treatment Modalities*. Given that a soon to be completed systematic review will cover this nomination, no further activity will be undertaken on this topic.

Evidence-based Practice Center Systematic Review Protocol, Project Title: *Chronic Venous Ulcers: A Comparative Effectiveness Review of Treatment Modalities* (Amendment date: September 2012). To view a description and status of the research review, please go to: <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/search-for-guides-reviews-and-reports/?productid=995&pageaction=displayproduct>

Topic Description

Nominator(s): A physician making the nomination on *behalf of an organization*

Nomination Summary: *The nominator is interested in the comparative effectiveness of the most common treatments for patients with venous leg ulcers. The nominator suggested a comparison of various treatment options, including compression, debridement, hyperbaric oxygen, moisture retentive dressings, laser therapy, and topical and systemic pharmaceuticals. The nominator is interested in the comparative effectiveness of the various treatments, in order to increase the rate of venous ulcer healing and patient comfort, and decrease patient morbidity and the associated economic and resource strain that venous ulcer management places on the health care system.*

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Population(s): Patients with venous leg ulcers

Intervention(s): Interventions that treat venous leg ulcers, including: autolytic debridement, surgical debridement, hyperbaric oxygen, compression therapy, laser therapy, negative pressure, topical and systemic pharmaceuticals including pentoxifylline, artificial skin, leg elevation, and other management strategies

Comparator(s): Other treatment options

Outcome(s): Increased rate of venous leg ulcer healing and patient comfort (e.g., wound base quality, quality of life, decreased pain, area reduction, depth reduction, vascularization of wound); decreased rate of patient morbidity and health care resource use and costs.

Key Questions from Nominator: 1. For patients with venous leg ulcers, what is the comparative effectiveness of the various management strategies for venous leg ulcers?

Considerations

- The topic meets EHC Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Venous leg ulcers (VLU) are very common in the United States, affecting up to 2 million people each year. They are caused by elevated venous pressure, turbulent flow, and inadequate venous return. The diagnosis of venous ulcers is made clinically on the basis of anatomic location, morphology, and a series of characteristic skin changes. Common treatment options include advanced wound dressings, antibiotics, and surgical interventions.
- This topic will be addressed by an in process AHRQ comparative effectiveness review (CER) titled *Chronic Venous Ulcers: A Comparative Effectiveness Review of Treatment Modalities*. Key questions from this report include:
 1. For patients with chronic venous leg ulcers, what are the benefits and harms of using dressings that regulate wound moisture with or without active chemical, enzymatic, biologic, or antimicrobial components in conjunction with compression systems when compared with using solely compression systems?
 - 2a. For patients with chronic venous leg ulcers that do not have clinical signs of cellulitis that are being treated with compression systems, what are the benefits and harms of using systemic antibiotics when compared with using solely compression systems?
 - 2b. For patients with chronic venous leg ulcers that do not have clinical signs of cellulitis that are being treated with dressings that regulate wound moisture with or without active chemical, enzymatic, biologic, or antimicrobial components, what are the benefits and harms of using systemic antibiotics when compared with using dressings alone?
 - 3a. For patients with chronic venous leg ulcers, what are the benefits and harms of surgical procedures aimed at the underlying venous abnormalities when compared with using solely compression systems?
 - 3b. For patients with chronic venous leg ulcers, what are the comparative benefits and harms of different surgical procedures for a given type of venous reflux and obstruction?