IS IT TIME TO RE-APPRAISE THE ROLE OF COMPRESSION IN NON-HEALING VENOUS LEG ULCERS?

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Aim: To evaluate the role of compression in non-healing venous leg ulcers (VLUs) of >3 months duration.

Methods: Patients’ records from three independent data sets of non-healing VLUs of >3 months duration were re-analysed. Two data sets were separate audits of clinical practice and the third comprised patients’ records from a randomised controlled trial. Some patients in each data set were never treated with compression. The effect of compression on healing at 6 months was tested with logistic regression.

Results: Patients’ baseline characteristics are summarised in Table 1*. In each data set patients in the compression and no-compression groups were matched according to size and age of ulcer, and there were no differences in comorbidities. (see figure).

Comparing the no-compression with the compression groups, the healing rate at 6 months was 68% versus 48% in study 1, 12% versus 6% in study 2 and 26% versus 11% in study 3. Use of compression was found to be an independent predictor of not healing with an Odds ratio of 0.422, 0.456 and 0.408 in study 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Conclusions: The healing rate of non-healing VLUs of >3 months duration in the no-compression groups was double that of VLUs in the compression groups. These findings need to be evaluated in a prospective study.

*Table not available in abstract book