Debbie Simon: clinically appropriate by the clinician.

information literature. Clinicians documented their experiences of using the product in conjunction with the product’s indications for use as described in the product information literature. Clinicians were asked to document their experience of the in-practice performance of ALLEVYN Life.

An in-practice appraisal was undertaken to determine usability, acceptability and clinical performance of the appraisal product ALLEVYN Life. In total, the product was used by 44 clinicians, all of whom were employed in District Nursing roles.

Method

All four sizes of ALLEVYN Life were available to the clinicians for use (10.3 x 10.3cm, 12.9 x 12.9cm, 15.4 x 15.4cm and 21 x 21cm). All were used during the appraisal and of these the most frequently used was the 10.3 x 10.3cm (44%), followed by the 12.9 x 12.9cm, 15.4 x 15.4cm and 21 x 21cm (11%, 8% and 8%, respectively). The appraisal feedback regarding key appraisal parameters is detailed below.

Wound-dressing performance

Product performance rating

Clinicians were asked to document their experience of the in-practice performance of ALLEVYN Life following their use of the dressing. A rating scale was used so that dressing performance in relation to the various parameters was rated as being "poor", "fair", "good", "very good" or "excellent". The rating for each parameter was summarised across all cases (see Figure 2).

For each of the eight dressing performance parameters that the clinicians were asked to score the ratings of "Good" to "Excellent" predominated, constituting more than 80% of responses in each case.

In wound appearance characteristics

The end of the appraisal clinicians indicated that there had been a decrease or no change in four key wound characteristics, wound pain (35%), redness (34%), exudate (31%), bacterial growth (27%). These four wound characteristics had been either a decrease or no change in over 90% of cases.

Figure 2. Wound appearance characteristics

Figure 3. Change in wound appearance

Wound pain

Exudate

Malodour

Wound size

4.5% 21.1% 30.4% 27.0% 17.4%

Table 1. Wound types treated

Further data were collected on both the location (in 25) and dimensions (in 26) of the wounds treated. The analysis showed that ALLEVYN Life was used to treat wounds in eight body locations. Most frequently it was used to treat wounds on the lower limb (86%, n=24) followed by wounds on the buttock (3.4%, n=1), abdomen (0.2%, n=0), buttock and the neck, hip, and thigh (all 0.4%, n=1).

Wound area could be calculated from the length and width data provided for 26 cases. Based on these data the mean wound width and length were calculated to be 3.9cm and 3.2cm respectively with mean wound area calculated as 9.7cm² assuming the wound has an elliptical shape.

The exudate level of the wound at the commencement of treatment with ALLEVYN Life was also recorded (in 21) with 52.4% of the wounds being classified as having either moderate or heavy levels of exudate (89%).

Dressing change frequency

During the appraisal the mean duration of ALLEVYN Life usage was 21 days (±10) with the mean number of ALLEVYN Life applications being 4.6 (±2.1). As part of the appraisal clinicians were asked to report on the wear time they had typically achieved during their use of ALLEVYN Life. They were also asked to specify what dressing they had been using previously and the topical wear time they had been achieving.

In 57% of cases (n=12) clinicians reported the type of dressing they had been using previously. In the majority of cases the dressing specified was a bandage (90%), followed by non-woven dressings (7%) and other (3%).

In 96% of cases (n=22) the wear time typically achieved during the use of ALLEVYN Life was 2-3 days which is similar to the calculated mean wear time being achieved pre-ALLEVYN Life (3.3 days). In the case of the 12 burns dressings in use pre-ALLEVYN Life, clinicians supplied a typical wear time for all 32 cases, and the mean wear time for bandages pre-ALLEVYN Life calculated from this data was 2.9 days. The wear time achieved typically during the use of ALLEVYN Life was supplied for 23 of the 26 cases (90%). On the basis of these data the mean wear time typically achieved during the appraisal of ALLEVYN Life was calculated at 4.5 days.

In 23 cases the wear time achieved with the use of ALLEVYN Life and that of the dressing previously employed was recorded, and therefore the increase in wear time could be directly calculated based on the data. The mean increase in wear time achieved with the use of ALLEVYN Life compared with the dressing previously employed was 1.4 days (from 3.4 to 4.8 day) at a mean percentage increase of 46% over the 23 cases. A further analysis was performed to examine the change in wear time when clinicians switched from using a previous foam dressing either as a primary or secondary dressing to ALLEVYN Life. There were 11 such cases, where foams had previously been used, and both wear times had been recorded for all 22 cases. The mean increase in wear time was 1.8 days (from 2.6 to 4.7 days). The mean percentage increase in wear time over these 11 cases was 62%.

Figure 4. Change in dressing wear time

The reasons for changing the ALLEVYN Life dressing were also documented and in 64.5% of cases (n=25) the clinician indicated the reason was either “routine change” or “to assess the wound” in only three cases (7.9%) did the clinicians specify the reason that for changing the dressing was “hesitation resolved”. This suggests that in some cases the wear time of ALLEVYN Life could have been extended further in some cases.

Discussion

The results of the appraisal suggested that ALLEVYN Life performed well during in-practice use delivering a positive extension in wear time over the previously used product and proving highly acceptable across a range of clinicians to the clinician.

For the 23 cases where both wear times were recorded the previous dressing and subsequently with ALLEVYN Life, the mean increase in wear time was 1.4 days. The difference in dressing change frequency after switching to ALLEVYN Life was calculated for each case using the wear time data. The mean difference in dressing change frequency was 0.9 changes per week is change from 1.0 to 2.1 changes per week. This suggests that across the range of wounds included in this appraisal it was possible, on average, to free up approximately one visit per week. The primary care organisation relevant to this appraisal covers a population of 161,600 people and a previous study investigating the impact of wounds estimated that the prevalence of wounds in the population is approximately 3.73 per 1000 population, which 76% are treated by community health care professionals.

This indicates that in the area covered by this provider there are likely to be approximately 601 patients with a wound at any given time, of which 445 will be treated in community healthcare. Data relating to dressing change frequency indicate that for circa 75% of these patients a dressing change is required at least once per week. Therefore, this conservative estimate of the potential to release nursing time, the calculation of released time could be made as follows: within a 46% visits around 5,375 hours. The data presented here suggest that switching to ALLEVYN Life from a range of different dressing types could result in an increase in wear time. However, as an even more conservative estimate of the potential to release nursing time, the calculation of released time could be made as follows: within a 46% visits around 5,375 hours. This has the potential to yield considerable benefit in practice efficiency, freeing up the most important resource in wound management, clinician time.

Conclusion

In conducting a structured and thorough appraisal in which key aspects of product performance and user experience were explored, clinicians were able to identify the most possible clinical impacts that adoption of the appraisal product could have. In this case the attributes of the product were observed and recommended by the clinicians who used it, and who easily and quickly to use.

The appraisal results indicated that adoption and implementation of the product would result in an increase in wear time and a shorter dressing change frequency. This has the potential to yield considerable benefit in practice efficiency, freeing up the most important resource in wound management, clinician time.