An evaluation of a new surgical post-operative foam island dressing in 149 patients undergoing a wide variety of surgical procedures in North Stafford

Introduction

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) survey surgical site infection rates across the UK. 1 This activity has raised awareness in the role of post-surgical wound management. The National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommend that at the end of an operation surgical incisions anticipated to heal by primary intention should be covered by a film membrane, with or without an absorbent pad. 2, 3 North Stafford evaluated a film dressing incorporating a foam island pad. This evaluation compared this product to standard care during November-December 2013.

Methodology

Evaluation forms were designed, for theatres and postoperative areas. 149 patients : 80 men and 69 Women with a mean age 62 were recruited. Surgeons and staff clinically evaluated ease of use, conformity to anatomical site, wear time and absorption. Patient opinions on comfort, pain on removal and performance during showering or washing were recorded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theatre data included:</th>
<th>Post-operative evaluation included:</th>
<th>Patient data captured: quality of life:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of surgery, Surgeon, Wound closure method, Ease of application, Fixation to anatomical site, Dressing size selected, Grade and position of clinician who applied the dressing.</td>
<td>Dressing performance on arrival to department or ward, Fluid absorbency and retention, Dressing change frequency, Size of dressings selected, Par-secured skin condition, Ease of application, Overall performance, Recommendations for future use.</td>
<td>Comfort during wear time, Pain on dressing change, Personal hygiene performance.</td>
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Table 1: Data was collated from three main areas: theatres, post-operative e.g. recovery, ward, ITU, CCU, and patients comments were documented on quality of life.

Results

Theatres: 95 surgical procedures were undertaken that included:- General surgery 20%, Orthopaedic 17%, Breast 15%, Heart 10%, Vascular 10%, Brain 5%. Most of the wounds (79%) had sutures, 93% of clinicians found the dressing conformed well and was easy to apply. Surgeons applied the most dressings in theatre 38%, 83% stated that the dressing met expectations.

Post-operative areas included recovery, ITU, CCU and surgical wards over a five day period 100 dressing changes were undertaken in 54 patients. The most common wound type orthopaedic. 17% of dressings were changed within 24 hours. 81% of patients had no documented skin damage. 83% stated dressing easy to apply. Patient feedback 83% found the dressing comfortable, conformable and no pain at dressing change. 27% of patients were able to shower with the dressing on. 36% of patients were transferred from theatres with drains in place. 6% patients who had undergone major surgery and required ITU CCU had minor issues with adhesion and absorption.

Discussion

The post-operative dressing performed well in two environments, theatre and post-operative areas. An interesting fact; following more than 100 dressing changes, a range of clinicians from scrub nurses, ODPs, and surgeons, were asked to document who applied the dressing. It was a pretty even split between the professional team but the surgeons came out on top at 36/38%. Many patients were discharged home with post operative instructions guides. Despite the complex and variety of surgical procedures undertaken, the dressing compared well to standard practice. High risk patients remain a challenge when applying dressing particularly around drain sites. Patients were asked to complete three questions regarding performance and quality of life, and how dressings can improve outcomes in simple practical ways like being able to shower following an operation. 45/83% of patients said they had no discomfort whilst wearing the dressing. The patients’ feedback was positive in that the new dressing met expectations.

References


The dressing evaluated in this study: C-View Post-Op (Aspen Medical Europe Ltd) compared to OpSite (Smith and Nephew UK).