

Use of Actilite® in City and Hackney Community Health Service

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Background

In the last decade the use of Silver dressings has increased drastically and is posing a concern to the cost of Prescribing and Medicine Management across all hospital and Community Health services NHS Trusts. Silver dressing usage, it's ability as an antimicrobial dressing and the rationale for it's selection by health care professionals is being questioned. The usual questions asked by the Procurement, Prescribing and Medicine Management team is whether the product is being used to its expected entity or just for the management of bioburden.

The Tissue Viability Team in City and Hackney has evaluated the effectiveness of Actilite® (Advancis Medical) dressing as an antimicrobial dressing in comparison to Silver Dressing. The Actilite® has been trialed in the Trust to look at its versatility in terms of cost, quality and effectiveness as well as patient experience. The case study below demonstrate the effectiveness of Actilite® in optimizing wound healing.

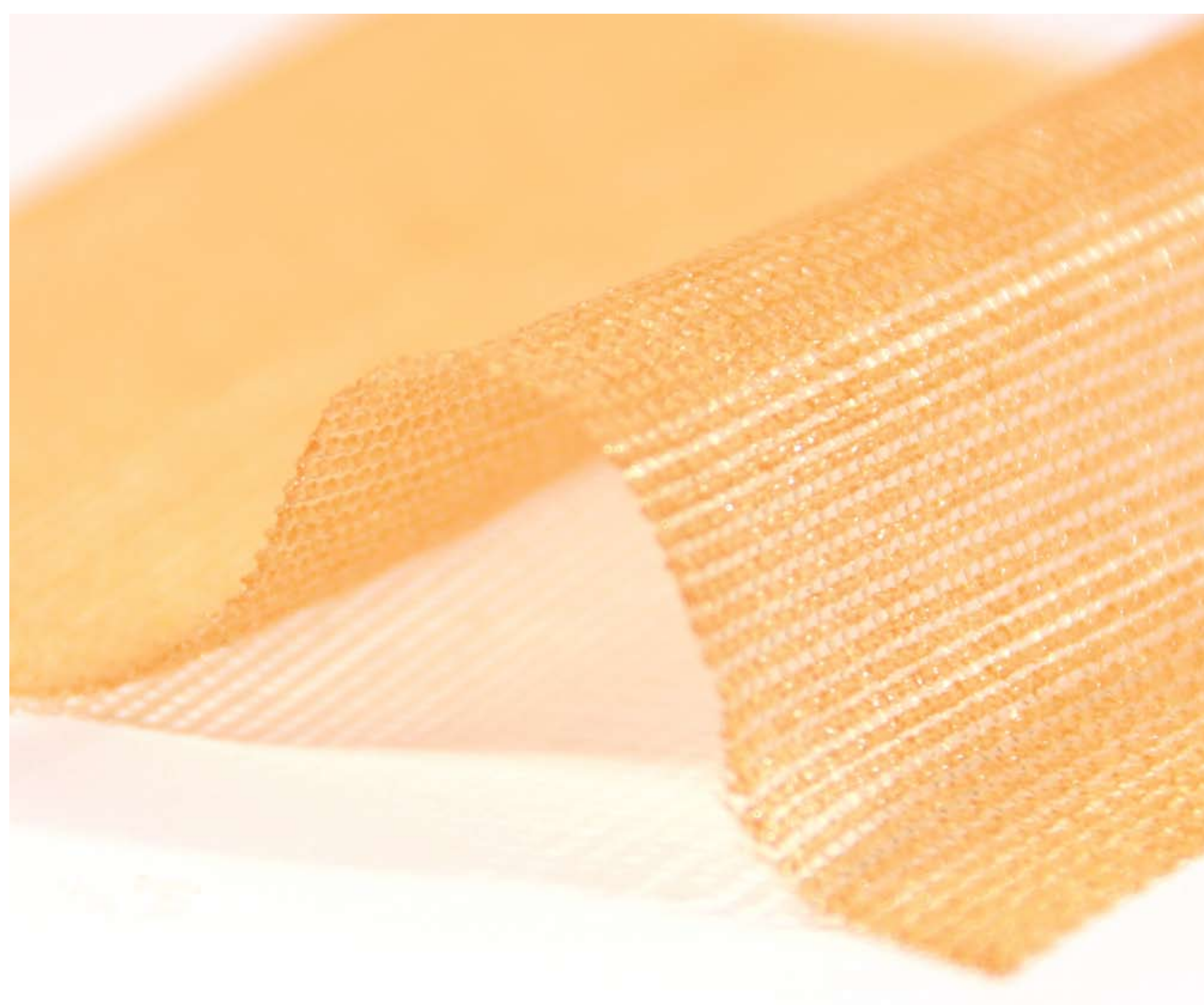


Fig. 1 Actilite - Wound contact layer impregnated with Activon+

Introduction

Most wounds normally heal within 4-14 days with little intervention. It is not necessarily an indicator of a problem in the healing process if a wound does not heal within a certain timeframe as long as progression is being made. However in the community, the staff find themselves with stagnant or hard to heal wounds. The health care professionals in community care often use Silver products in patient care to maintain the wound free from infection or for the reduction of bioburden. They are unable to achieve healing which poses a concern as the primary aim is healing the wound and ensure independence for the patients.

Often patients with such non healing wounds find themselves liking silver dressings as they maintain a comfortable albeit constant stagnant wound. There is the fear, that if the silver dressing is changed to a different dressing, infection or hospital admission may occur. This is also acknowledged by Health Care professionals.

A case study was undertaken on a 70 year old male suffering from a chronic wound for the past eight months. He has been on a regime of Silver dressings to manage infection and exudate for the past four months until he was referred to the Tissue Viability Service.

Method

The 70 year old male patient was seen by the Tissue Viability Service. Dressing selection and a holistic assessment was carried out.

The wound presented was 45 sqcm, sloughy, smelly, warm to touch with redness to the surrounding area as well as an increase in pain and exudate level. The wound showed signs and symptoms of infection.

It was noted that this gentleman became withdrawn and psychologically disturbed. He was socially isolated due to the high exudate level and odour of the wound when he ventured out of his house.

Actilite® is made from knitted viscose for low adherence and coated with anti-bacterial Activon+. The dressing is designed to protect a wound, promote healing and allow the passage of exudate. Reduction in bacterial colonization is achieved in a natural way through the antibacterial properties of the Manuka plant. Actilite® has a level of Activon+ honey appropriate for wound protection whilst the antibacterial effect has been enhanced with the addition of high grade antibacterial Manuka oil (Activon+).

Results

The use of the Actilite® for 3 weeks has kick started the healing phase and the wound healed after 6 weeks of usage of Actilite®.

At the end of the Actilite® treatment the gentleman was pain free and was happy to mobilize as there was no odour or wetness.

The hygroscopic effect of Activon+ promotes a moist wound healing environment. The dressing is easy to apply, with honey being naturally self-adherent it will gently

adhere to surrounding dry skin but will not adhere to a wound bed. Apply a secondary dressing of choice (this can be an absorbent dressing or semi-permeable film dressing depending on the nature of the wound); in this case an Eclipse® (Advancis Medical) dressing was used.

Discussion

It is important to be able recognize the stage a wound is at in the healing phase and to know if a wound is not following the normal progression in healing. Identifying debris in the wound and knowing how best to deal with it are important aspects of wound management. Preserving viable tissue and structures within the wound bed will assist the healing process.

Wound dressings play an important part in creating the right environment in which wounds heal efficiently with an optimum outcome. The selection of a dressing may only be a part of the requirement for effective wound healing. A full holistic assessment is advised for patients whose wounds do not heal in a normal pattern or time frame.

Conclusion

A holistic assessment of the patients needs is essential to ensure the healing potential is optimized. Dressing selection and knowing the performance of a dressing is crucial to optimized healing. Actilite®, a honey based dressing is an effective antimicrobial product when used appropriately after a holistic assessment of the patient.