

Sterile dressing packs (SDPs)

Supporting resources available on the PrescQIPP website:



Bulletin



Data pack



Audit tool

<http://www.prescqipp.info/resources/viewcategory/238-wound-care-sterile-dressing-packs>

Introduction

Over £4.8 million is spent annually on SDPs in England (ePACT Jan 14). This is a remarkable amount for a product that has no evidence to support its use.

Key recommendations

- Review the use of SDPs. Ensure they are being used appropriately in line with local wound care policy and with minimal waste of pack contents.
- Ensure that if an SDP is needed at all, that the most cost-effective product meeting requirements is prescribed. Currently the SDP called "Woundcare®" is the most cost-effective item based on the Drug Tariff price and contents.¹
- Decide whether a procedure needs to be clean or sterile before opening a sterile dressing pack. The majority of wounds managed in the community (mainly chronic) only need a clean procedure.² When an SDP is needed, use products with more useful contents e.g. gloves/apron included, see Drug Tariff for contents^{4,3} or table 1 in the sterile dressing pack bulletin.
- Regularly assess wound healing and match prescribing of SDPs accordingly, rather than automatically prescribing a quantity of 10 per script. Issuing prescriptions for 4 or 5 SDPs should prompt a review of the wound after 2 weeks.

Supporting evidence

The BNF states that the sterile dressing pack has a very limited role - it is just to provide a clean work surface.⁴

The contents of most sterile dressing packs have barely changed over the years and contain items that no longer have a place in modern wound care (cotton wool, gauze swabs).³

NICE guidelines⁵ and HPA guidelines⁶ both advise upon the use of disposable gloves when handling wounds. They also both advise upon the use of single-use aprons to protect clothing from contamination with body fluids. However, there is no recommendation in either guideline on the use of sterile dressing packs specifically for these purposes.

Savings available

Full information on SDP costs and contents is available in the bulletin. Always check the current Drug Tariff for up to date prices and whether products can be prescribed on an FP10
www.ppa.org.uk/ppa/edt_intro.htm¹

Potential annual savings are **£926,475** by switching to a more cost-effective SDP and **£8,633 per 100,000 patients (£4.8 million total)** for nil prescribing.

Summary of annual savings for SDPs nationally (ePACT Jan 14)

Annual savings if average cost (£21.58) per 1000 patients reached	Annual savings if switch to Woundcare® SDP	Annual savings for nil prescribing
£546,563	£926, 475	>£4.8 million

References

1. Electronic Drug Tariff, January 2014 www.ppa.org.uk/ppa/edt_intro.htm Part 1XA - Wound Management Dressings. Accessed 11.12.13
2. Stephens F, Stillard K. Using PACT data to monitor usage of sterile dressing packs. Nurse Prescriber/Community Nurse 2001; 7(1):37-38.
3. NPC Wound care: data focussed commentary. 2009. Liverpool. www.npc.nhs.uk/therapeutics/other/wound/resources/dfc_wound_care.pdf Accessed 12.12.13
4. Joint Formulary Committee. British National Formulary. 66th ed. London: BMJ Publishing Group and Royal Pharmaceutical Society. December 2013 update. (Appendix A5.7.1)
5. NICE Clinical Guideline 139. Infection: prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections in primary and community care, 28 March 2012. London <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG139>
6. Health Protection Agency. Infection Control Guidelines in Community Settings. 2007. www.hpa.org.uk Accessed 27.01.14