

EDITORIAL

COVID-19 consequences in the management of persons with wounds

COVID-19 will celebrate its 2nd birthday early in 2022, or at least regarding its pandemic status. As a world population, living through the worst pandemic of modern mankind, we are only too familiar with both the personal and collective consequences of the virus.

Such familiar, immediate consequences of the virus are those of its early-stage issues. Being some 24 months in, are we starting to see the more mid-stage consequences? When will we see or measure the long-term impact on mankind? No one knows as the so-called end has been in sight many times, only to be re-invigorated through variants and government reaction.¹

In recognition of COVID's milestone birthday, we will highlight 19 of the consequences of COVID in the management of persons with wounds.

1. Most practices saw a significant reduction in patient visits^{2,3}
2. A significant number of patients saw an increase in wound severity^{4,5}
3. Most patients postponed or delayed aspects of their care⁶
4. Patients with diabetic foot ulcers, who were admitted to tertiary care, had a 3-fold risk of amputation compared to pre-pandemic⁷
5. COVID results in adverse skin reactions and increased risk of pressure ulceration in both patients and healthcare staff^{8,9}
6. Wound consults became more virtual^{10,11}
7. Self or family care became more prevalent^{12,13}
8. SARS-CoV-2 is associated with physiologic changes that may affect healing¹⁴
9. Online medical education became the new normal, with face-to-face less frequent¹⁵
10. Caregiver and patient burnout¹⁶
11. Technology, including collaborative platforms, became a bigger part of daily life for caregivers and patients¹⁷
12. Changing mental health and patient care requirements¹⁸
13. Acceleration of global health challenges, some of which impact persons with wounds like antimicrobial resistance¹⁹
14. Medical device and pharmaceutical companies prioritised digital capabilities to engage with customers, as face-to-face was forbidden²⁰
15. Clinical trial participation became non-existent, and the development of newer technologies was impacted negatively²⁰
16. Quality of Life for persons with wounds was negatively impacted²¹
17. Health care conferences became virtual²²
18. Both research, and subsequent publication of findings, have been greatly accelerated regarding many aspects of COVID including the impact on persons suffering with wounds.²³
19. Life as we know it, even for those of us not suffering with wounds, has been greatly changed and impacted for a long time.²⁴ If not forever.

As we understand more and more about the pathophysiology of COVID-19²⁵ we better understand its impact on specific patient populations.²⁶ It is, however, going to take years to understand the full impact of delayed wound care during the pandemic, but early evidence paints a dire picture of what is to come.²⁷

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