

Wound Care Innovation in Winnipeg

For years now, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's Home Care Program, under the direction of clinical nurse specialist Michelle Todoruk-Orchard, has been fighting the good fight for quality wound care, both in the community and in home care nursing clinics. With dogged determination, the program has followed a path that proves that vision — and a laser-like focus on the patient and advanced practice — can make a difference in health-care delivery and patient outcomes.

Todoruk-Orchard has become renowned for her know-how in wound care and diabetes education, and she provides evidence-informed care along with the Home Care Program's Wound Care Best Practice Team (WCBPT) nurses. During the last decade, Todoruk-Orchard has also played a pivotal role in the development of a regional approach for wound prevention and management across the care continuum and in the formulation of evidence-based guidelines that are now utilized in both the Winnipeg region and other regions throughout the province. Teaching by example every day, Todoruk-Orchard is also a vocal champion for advanced practice education options that give registered nurses the chance to deepen their knowledge and skills in this evolving area of community care. Once they have spent time with Todoruk-Orchard, many nurses are inspired to obtain advanced practice credentials through extra course work and a competency exam.

Todoruk-Orchard and her WCBPT colleagues see a steady stream of post-operative wounds (e.g., Caesarian-section incisions), pressure ulcers, venous leg ulcers, arterial ulcers and diabetic foot ulcers, all of which could lead to further complications and health crises if not treated effectively. The application of evidenced-informed protocols ensures consistent, positive outcomes for clients. Seven days a week, the Home Care clinics take referrals from local hospitals, family physicians, physician specialists, outpatient clinics, long-term care facilities and other home care services. Home Care also has a well-developed Community Intravenous Program (CIVP) that provides services such as IV antibiotic therapy for clients at home and in clinic settings.

"We've reduced all of the waiting and the complicated referral issues that make the treatment process frustrating, both for patients and for their health-care providers," says Todoruk-Orchard. "After a hospital stay or when treating a chronic condition, our nurses provide quick access to the integrated assessment and treatment care. In addition to the desired improvements in healing times and reduced emergency department visits, the clinic has the capacity to offer ongoing social and educational support that helps patients make decisions about their overall health.



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Michelle Todoruk-Orchard

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Nurse-led Innovations

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"Early and consistent interventions by nurses can prevent chronic returns to hospital and vastly improve the quality of life for many people," says Todoruk-Orchard. "It's nurses at their best – bringing their highly targeted expertise to a problem and solving it." She estimates that of the 14,000 people served by the Home Care Program, 3,000 are receiving some kind of nursing care, and 40 per cent of these require wound care.

It is evident that the need for wound care services will grow as the baby boom ages, observes Todoruk-Orchard. Already the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba has invited her to participate in discussions about the future of wound care in the province as it anticipates the need to add more interdisciplinary care and use of new technological and pharmaceutical approaches that support wound healing.

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Given her strong commitment to improving wound care management across Canada, Todoruk-Orchard does her best to combine a range of research, outreach and knowledge transfer activities with her clinic responsibilities. She is, for example, involved with the ongoing Canadian Bandaging Trial being conducted at Queen's University.

Innovator:

Michelle Todoruk-Orchard

Clinical Nurse Specialist

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Home Care Program

Web links:

<http://www.wrha.mb.ca/professionals/ebpt/woundcare.php>

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6955/10/20>

http://cawc.net/images/uploads/wcc/8-1-WCC_Vol_8_No1.pdf

<http://www.caet.ca/caet-english/about.htm>

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