In 1996, an All-Ireland group of health care professionals met in Tullamore, Co. Offaly, to establish a wound care organisation which would promote best practice in wound care. Thus, the Wound Management Association of Ireland was born. Since then much has changed in terms of service provision, education and training, research and development, advancements in wound care technologies together with specialist journals and establishment of other national and international organisations.

The WMAI has been to the fore nationally and internationally in those years and many of our members have gained international reputations for their work in wound management and we are very proud of their achievements.

The challenges today share some similarities with those of 1996 in that wound management still struggles for recognition in policy agendas and as a speciality. Yet, we must not underestimate the enormous advances that have taken place. It is easy to forget that 15 years ago wound care clinics including diabetic foot and leg ulcer clinics were the exception rather than the norm, the use of technology was at an embryonic stage and outcomes were viewed predominantly in terms of healing rates.

As we face the future, we need to set new challenges and goals and continue to strive to promote best practice in wound care. We need to become more proactive in placing wound care on the policy agenda, and not let the gains of the last 15 years slip away. There is still a need to ensure that outcomes are viewed in terms of healing, cost, efficacy, efficiency and importantly quality of life. When budgets contract it is too easy to focus on cost as the sole issue, but research has shown the importance of quality of life measures as a treatment goal.

We have seen the improved patient outcomes when service is delivered by multi-disciplinary professionals skilled in the art and science of wound healing. It is the responsibility of all of us, not to let this slip away and to work collaboratively in areas of education and research.

Finally, as I come to the end of 4 years as president of WMAI, I wish to thank most sincerely all members and the national executive for their support, work and commitment to the goals of this organisation. I have been very honored to have been elected president and look forward to supporting the new executive.

I wish you all a very good conference in 2011 as we celebrate 15 years and like to extend my welcome to speakers and delegates from nine countries. Well done to all the presenters and special thanks to the organizing committee and the Galway Bay Hotel.

Georgina
Guest Editorial: Zena Moore, immediate past-president EWMA

As we face the worst economic crisis of our lives, the words of Charles Dickens come to mind “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..., it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...” Reflecting on these words, it is possible to focus only on the negative and to say that indeed it is the winter of despair. However, if we look closely we can see that deep within the darkness there is a light. Change brings about opportunities to reflect on our current practices and to ask ourselves if we have perhaps become carried away with technology and have forgotten the fundamental principles of wound management. The principles of assessment and diagnosis are so important in ensuring that we know what is going on with the patient, in order that we may modify or eliminate factors which are impeding the wound healing process. The selection of therapeutic interventions follows assessment and diagnosis, and should never supersede it. Reading the literature, however, it never ceases to amaze that despite the fact that wounds have been in existence since man walked on earth, many patients experience poor clinical outcomes attributed in part to a lack of focused assessment and diagnosis. Health economics is based on the concept of scarcity, which suggests that there will never be sufficient resources to meet the ever changing health needs of society (Phillips, 2005). Thus, the underlying premise is that the delivery of health care should be founded on equity and efficiency, in other words, making the best use of the resources that are available (Phillips, 2005). I would challenge you and say that we are in fact in exciting times. Our understanding of the wound healing process and new developments in diagnostics means that now more than ever before it is possible for us to achieve gold. Stand back from your patient and reflect on where you are at. Choosing the right treatment for the right patient is dependent on knowing what you want to achieve, how will you know this if you do not ask the right questions? I suggest that even today, we will achieve cost effective goals if we articulate our expectations appropriately.

Southern Branch News: A Conference was held on “Perspectives on Wound care” on 9th April, 2011 in the School of Nursing and Midwifery University College Cork.

Registration was at 8.30AM and the conference was opened by Professor Josephine Hegarty with a very gracious welcome to all attendees. Eileen O Riordan made the first presentation which dealt with the Myths and Facts of Burn Care. This was a very informative and elaborate presentation from a very knowledgeable professional which was warmly received by all. Pat McCluskey dealt with Fungating Wounds and this was very pertinent due to the ever increasing older adults requiring palliative care in the community.

The presentation after coffee break dealt with Dermatoses of the Lower Limb which daily becoming a chronic problem – Esthers knowledge and expertise in her area of practice was very informative.

Siobhan Murphy took the participants on a journey and demonstrated in a workshop how sourcing the evidence is only a click away – this was hands on practical and destroyed a number of myths for many.

After lunch case studies were presented by Mary Conroy from the acute perspective and Eileen Walsh and Bernie Buckley from the community setting. This conference was evaluated highly with more of the same being requested by all.

Annual general meeting of the Southern Branch will be held in Bru Columbanus, Wilton, Cork on Wednesday 19th October at 6pm. All Southern Branch members will be informed and contacted to attend.

Southern branch members are looking forward to attending the biannual conference in Galway on the 4th and 5th October to build the future of wound care.

Western Branch News: A highly successful 4-week programme on assessment and management of diabetic foot disease took place in the Podiatry Department in Merlin Park in Galway. This programme was completed in partnership with the School of Podiatry in NUI Galway and the Western branch of WMAI and supported by ConvaTec. During the programme delegates participated in workshops and lectures with a focus on foot assessment, DFU guidelines, wound bed assessment and dressing selection. This was the third year of the course and as always a full attendance was achieved.
Message from HSE Procurement

A National Wound Management Committee was established in January 2011 in order to establish a national framework agreement for wound management products. The role of this team is to identify, procure and implement a National Framework Agreement for Wound Management Products to meet the current future needs of patients and service users in a responsive, quality oriented, cost effective and flexible manner in compliance with the established 2009 HSE National Wound Management Guidelines. The scope of this framework will include HSE hospitals, Primary Care Reimbursement Schemes (PCRS), voluntaries and funded agencies who will present to the market as a single procurement entity.

It is the HSE’S objective to standardise the supply of quality products whilst obtaining value for money in order to ensure sustainability of services in the current economic climate. The HSE wishes to ensure an integrated care path for patients between acute and primary care by encompassing community reimbursement requirements.

The successful suppliers will be placed on a National Framework Agreement from which contracts will be awarded from subsequent mini-competitions or on the basis of the proposals received at the establishment of the framework.

If you have any questions on this process please feel free to contact Ms Siobhan Dunphy. HSE Procurement Siobhan.dunphy@hse.ie.

In memoriam: Tom Defloor

On Tuesday March 23rd 2011 we lost one of our most honourable members, a colleague and a friend. Tom Defloor, EPUAP President in the period between September 2005 and 2007, passed away after a year of fighting for his life.

Tom devoted most of his life to the prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers. He did this by building an international leading research group at the University of Gent in Belgium, by educating clinical practitioners nationally as well as internationally via his e-learning tool PUCLAS and of course by playing an important role in the European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel. He also was a leading partner in the development of our recent international guidelines and in this activity worked tirelessly with the US National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel.

In all these activities Tom had his own unique style. He was charming, with a lot of humour and generosity, but nevertheless he always gave a clear, concise, serious message. He loved scientific debate and was not afraid to spawn controversial new ideas or hypotheses that generated new research, and always with the implications for clinical practice in his mind.

Posted by Mike Clarke on EPUAP website
feel clinicians and industry can influence strategic planning for the future of wound care practices within the organisations.

**Report: Julie Jordan O’Brien**

The Wound Management Association of Ireland is a co-operating organisation of the European Wound Management Association www.ewma.org