



Eucomed press release 02/09 - "Patient safety threatened by sub-standard wound care treatment" warns Eucomed

Two of the most common causes of adverse effects in healthcare are surgical wound infections and hospital-acquired pressure ulcers. Up to 50% of hospital patients have a wound, many developed during hospitalisation. Surgical wound infections occur in 30-40 patients for every 1000 operations performed, and one in five hospital inpatients has a pressure ulcer.

Brussels, 17 March 2009 – Eucomed, the voice of the medical technology in Europe, today urged policy-makers to take measures ensuring that wounds are appropriately diagnosed and treated. Hans Lundgren, chairman of Eucomed's Advanced Woundcare Group met with MEP Amalia Sartori, the Parliament's rapporteur on the Council Recommendation on Patient Safety to talk about better addressing this important issue in Europe.

"Excess mortality among patients contracting a surgical wound infection is 5%, and the cost of surgical infection is estimated at between €1.74m and €2.34m annually for a typical hospital." said Lundgren. "In addition to today's challenges, the treatment of chronic wounds will become a more major concern for health care systems in Europe as the population ages, because of the strong correlation between age and the prevalence of chronic wounds."

Eucomed has identified several policy measures which can improve the way wounds are managed and treated in healthcare settings:

- Health authorities should support and promote research and exchange of best practice, including after-care, for the treatment of wounds and the prevention of wound complications.
- Education for healthcare providers on the importance of wound care is essential for a good quality health system, and there is a need to foster education and training of healthcare workers at Member State level, with particular provisions for healthcare workers specialising in wound care.
- Member States should review the availability of, and access to, best practice wound treatments as part of their ongoing efforts to identify and promote best practice in patient care.

The association is convinced that the Commission's initiatives on patient safety have great potential for helping to raise standards of wound care. Furthermore, implementing its policy recommendations will help reduce the total number of hospital-acquired infections that affect between 8 and 12% of patients in Europe.

About the Communication

The "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on patient safety, including the prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections" acknowledges the importance of patient safety and the danger and the cost (human and economic) that adverse events have for any high quality health system. The report by Amalia Sartori will be voted by the Parliament's ENVI Committee at the end of March 2009 which will then be voted during the European Parliament Plenary session later this year.

About Eucomed

Eucomed is the Voice of the medical technology industry in Europe. Eucomed represents directly and indirectly 4500 designers, manufacturers and suppliers of medical technology used in the diagnosis, prevention, treatment and amelioration of disease and disability. Small and medium sized companies make up more than 80% of this sector. The European medical technology industry invests some €5.8 billion in R&D and employs near to 529,000 highly skilled workers. The mission of Eucomed is to improve patient and clinician access to modern, innovative and reliable medical technology.

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