

Consensus on Burn Blister Management (November 2011)

Concern:

There is inconsistent policy and practice by clinicians working in non-Burn Service health providers including Walk-in Centres, Urgent Care Centres, Emergency Departments, and amongst General Practitioners regarding the management of burn blisters.

Consultation:

Responses were received from the Lead Clinicians and Lead Nurses from the LSEBN Burn Services (Queen Victoria Hospital - East Grinstead; Chelsea and Westminster Hospital - London; Stoke Mandeville Hospital - Aylesbury and St Andrew's Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery - Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford).

Consensus was agreed on the recommendation.

Rationale:

'Deroofting' burn blisters

- Allows assessment of burn wound bed
- Removes non-viable tissue
- Prevents uncontrolled rupture of blister
- Avoids risk of blister infection
- Relieves pain in tense blisters
- Reduces restriction of movement of joints

Recommendation:

The London and South East Burns Network (LSEBN) recommends that:

- **Burn blisters over the size of the patient's little fingernail should be 'deroofted'**
- **The burn wound should be dressed appropriately with a non or low-adherent dressing**
- **You refer the patient to your local ED/ burns service if your facility does not have the resources to 'derooft' blisters**
- **You contact the local burns service to identify training /education needs**

Consideration should be given to:

- The risk/ benefit of 'deroofting' small, non-tense blisters
- The risk/benefit of 'deroofting' blisters on the palmar surface of the hand and the plantar aspect of the foot
- Patient compliance with the procedure and on-going care when considering the management of small, non-tense blisters i.e. patients with dementia, learning difficulties, and toddlers

Literature Review:

There is limited good quality evidence regarding management of burn blisters. The following article provides a good review:

Sargent, R, Management of Blisters in the Partial-Thickness Burn: An Integrative Research Review. Journal of Burn Care and Research 2006 January/February Volume 27, Number 1 pages 66-81

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