

**Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority Priorities Forum
Statement**

Number: 27

Subject: Topical Negative Pressure (TNP) for wound closure

Date of decision: February 2012

Date review: February 2014

GUIDANCE

Topical Negative Pressure (TNP) dressings, also known as vacuum-assisted wound closure (VAC™) dressings, use vacuum assisted drainage to remove blood or serous fluid from a wound or operation site with the intention of increasing the rate of wound healing. At present this therapy is only available from the monopoly supplier Kinetic Concepts Inc (KCI).

Published studies have not shown a convincing advantage over more traditional methods with regard to rate of healing. Adverse events are reported as similar to more traditional methods. There is some anecdotal evidence of advantages in terms of patient experience, for example, TNP dressings are changed less frequently than traditional dressings and so may reduce pain felt by patients. In addition the seal produced by the vacuum reduces leakage from the wound so may reduce discomfort.

TNP is only likely to be comparable in cost to traditional dressings in more complex cases - for example where the use of traditional dressings would require the district nurse to visit more than once a day.

Recommendations

- TNP should only be considered for the most complex wounds where other dressing methods have been tried and failed, or where other methods would place high demands on nursing time. Tissue viability nurse input on decision to use TNP should be sought where available.
- All patients using TNP dressings should be monitored for improvement and patient experience. Regular audits of use should be carried out.
- If patients are being discharged into the community with TNP in place then nurses in the community should be contacted by the ward to plan care, visiting the patient in hospital to observe dressing changes if necessary. The community team lead will make the final decision as to whether to continue with TNP dressings following discharge.
- The discharging hospital is responsible for providing TNP dressings and equipment up to the trim point.

The Human Rights Act has been considered in the formation of this guidance.