NICE National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Topical antimicrobial dressings for infected leg ulcers in people aged 16 years and over: late-stage assessment

Resource impact assessment (update post first committee meeting)

At the committee meeting on 16 January 2025, the Resource Impact Assessment (RIA) team presented to the committee the potential cost savings that could be achieved if NHS organisations were to shift to less expensive options for antimicrobial dressings (AMDs). The following assumptions were made and the limitations highlighted to the committee:

- clinical equivalence for all AMDs
- organisations could easily switch to cheaper alternatives
- dressings are used for the same period for the same grade of ulcer
- Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) unit costs used were representative of the leg ulcers cost profile even though it was for all wounds rather than only infected leg ulcers.

The weighted average unit costs were different from those used in the EAG economic model. The RIA team calculated average unit costs based on the unit of measurement (for example per gram). This misrepresented the average unit cost of gel, paste, or cream-based AMDs which should have been ‘per item’ rather than ‘per gram’. It also had a confounding impact on the average unit cost used to estimate savings.

Post committee update

Due to the misrepresentation of the average unit cost of gel, paste, or cream-based AMDs, the RIA team updated the unit costs of the different AMDs post committee to align with EAG’s economic model (table 1). The RIA team has calculated the weekly resource impact of the different AMDs (table 2) based on the revised unit cost (table 1). The calculations are based on the

Issue date: February 2025

assumptions used in the EAG's economic model and acknowledge the limitations discussed in the external assessment report.

Table 1 Unit costs (based on the EAG economic model report)

Dressing agent used	Unit cost (£)
Enzyme alginogel	18.20
Octenidine	16.13
Silver	7.52
Copper	5.18
PHMB	8.33
DACC	4.34
Honey	3.03
Chitosan	4.75
Iodine	1.45
Chlorhexidine	0.51

Table 2 Potential resource impact based on unit costs and number of AMDs used per week

Agent	Number of AMDs used per week	Weighted average unit cost	Cost per week
Copper	2.33	£5.18	£12.10
PHMB	1.40	£8.33	£11.67
Silver	1.49	£7.52	£11.21
Chitosan	2.33	£4.75	£11.09
Iodine	4.17	£1.45	£6.04
Honey	1.79	£3.03	£5.41

Enzyme alginogel, octenidine, DACC and chlorhexidine are excluded from the above table as the usage per week is unknown.

The updated RIA shows that shifting to less expensive options for AMDs may result in savings to the NHS. This assumes the number of AMDs used per week in table 2 is accurate for each agent. However, if the number of AMDs used per week were equivalent, shifting to less expensive options could still result in savings.

Conclusion

There may be potential savings associated with the draft recommendations. Savings would depend on local current practice, prices being paid, and the considerations for choosing the least expensive option outlined in the draft recommendations.