ABSTRACT:
Treatement of fungating malignant breast lesions has always been challenging due to the complexity of the lesions. Patients typically complain of atypical pain associated with any type of dressing change for management of exudate, bleeding, and odor. Use of a silver impregnated dressing with a silicone backing in 6 patients was found to be effective in eliminating pain associated with previous dressings such as wet to dry, controlling odor with the silver dressing, reducing the bioburden with the silver in the dressing and management of exudate and bleeding with the foam dressing.

6 patients with advanced fungating breast lesions were chosen to participate in the use of the silver foam dressing. All of the patients were able to perform or assist with their dressing changes due to previous unpleasant experiences with traditional dressings that dried on friable, odiferous, heavily exudating, bleeding tissue. Patients were often unable to leave their homes due to the pain, bleeding and the odiferous exudate that would often soak their clothes. Use of a silver sulfate impregnated dressing with silicone was found to be effective in eliminating pain associated with previous dressings changes, control of odor with the silver that helped reduce microbial colonization in the wound, and managed the bleeding and exudate with the absorbent foam dressing.

TREATMENT:
Goals were to promote patient comfort, confidence and well-being, prevent isolation and improve quality of life by controlling or eliminating symptoms associated with this disease. Fungating lesions on the breast or head and neck are associated with particular physical and psychological problems. Often the location of the lesion is one of the more difficult things to deal with and to find the right dressing and the best way to secure it. Use of the foam dressing with silicone may not need any securing device if placed inside a bra, or camisole or net garment.

DEFINITION AND SYMPTOMS:
National Cancer Institute defines a fungating skin lesion as a type of skin lesion that is marked by ulcerations and necrosis and usually is odiferous. Fungating lesions are rare, occurring in approximately 5% of all cancer patients. 62% of the Lesions occur in the breast, 24% occur in the head and neck, 3% in the groin, back and genitals and 8% occur in other areas. Fungating lesions develop rapidly and serve as a reminder that the disease is progressive due to the following reported symptoms:
- Odor
- Exudate
- Bleeding
- Pain

Most fungating lesions deteriorate over time and have a devastating effect on a person’s physical and emotional well being.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE:
Patients with advanced fungating breast lesions were chosen to participate in the use of silver foam dressings with silicone. Pain control and fear of pain was a major concern of all participants due to previous unpleasant experiences with traditional dressings that dried on friable, odiferous, heavily exudating, bleeding tissue. Patients were often unable to leave their homes due to the pain, bleeding and the odiferous exudate that would often soak their clothes. Use of a silver sulfate impregnated dressing with silicone was found to be effective in eliminating pain associated with previous dressings changes, control of odor with the silver that helped reduce microbial colonization in the wound, and managed the bleeding and exudate with the absorbent foam dressing.

CONCLUSION:
After application of silver foam dressing with silicone all of the patients were able to perform or assist with their dressing changes without pain or fear of anticipated pain, odor from the wound was reduced or eliminated and the fluid exudate and bleeding was manageable or eliminated resulting in improved quality of life while promoting patient comfort and a sense of well being.

The rarity of the disease and incidence of only 90 research articles in the past 30 years recognizes the need for increased research to encourage early detection and effective treatment for affected patients.

REFERENCES:

SILVER FOAM DRESSING WITH SILICONE APPLICATION:
1. Clean the wound with normal saline or water, and pat dry.
2. Remove the release films and apply the adherent side to the wound, do not stretch.
3. Overlap dry skin by at least 2 cm. If needed, the dressing may be cut to fit various size or shaped wounds.
4. Secure as needed with an elastic netting vest, cotton camisole or similar.
Use of a Silver Foam Dressing with Silicone for Fungating Breast Lesions

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