

BURNS ACROSS THE AGES

Assessing burns in the community pharmacy: a secondary prevention initiative

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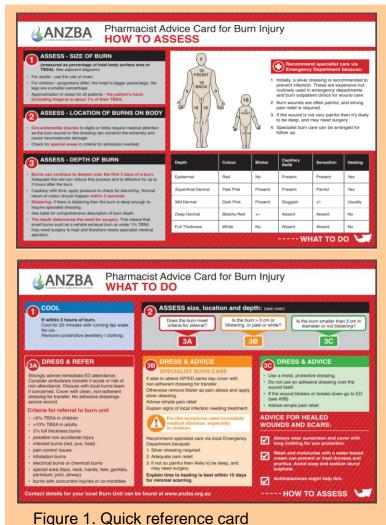


Background

Secondary prevention is aimed at early treatment to optimise outcomes. In burns, this involves good burn first aid and early appropriate management. Delays can cause burn wound conversion, wound infection, surgical delay and worse scarring. Sometimes delays occur when patients present to pharmacies because they are reluctant to seek other health care options. Improved knowledge of burn assessment and care can empower pharmacists to confidently deliver appropriate care and referrals.

Method

A CPD educational article for community pharmacists was produced by the ANZBA prevention committee. This provided role relevant information about burn first aid, wound assessment, dressing choice, referral reasons, and advice.



Quick reference card

A quick reference card was created for pharmacists for free and accessible download from the PSA and ANZBA websites. This card included assessment information on different severities of burns and included advice on referral or management. See Figure 1 for images of both sides of the card.

Case scenario

Jacob, a seven-year-old boy, attends your pharmacy with his mother. He sustained a burn to the inside of his calf from a motorbike exhaust a few days ago. The burn is half the size of his hand, looks white and does not hurt. Jacob's mum wants a dressing for the wound. What assessment do you make and what advice do you give?

Case Scenarios

Two case scenarios were included; one of which was a child with a small but deep contact burn requiring referral (see above), and the other was an adult with a scald burn which did not require referral.

Discussion

The aim of the initiative was to empower pharmacists in the management and referral of minor burns using simple communication and supportive documentation. Partnering with other health care professionals to deliver good patient outcomes is a sustainable and cost effective professional strategy. Future evaluation of effectiveness is possible via BRANZ data.



