

EVALUATION OF THE NEW ACTIVHEAL® TRACHEOSTOMY FOAM WITHIN AN INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

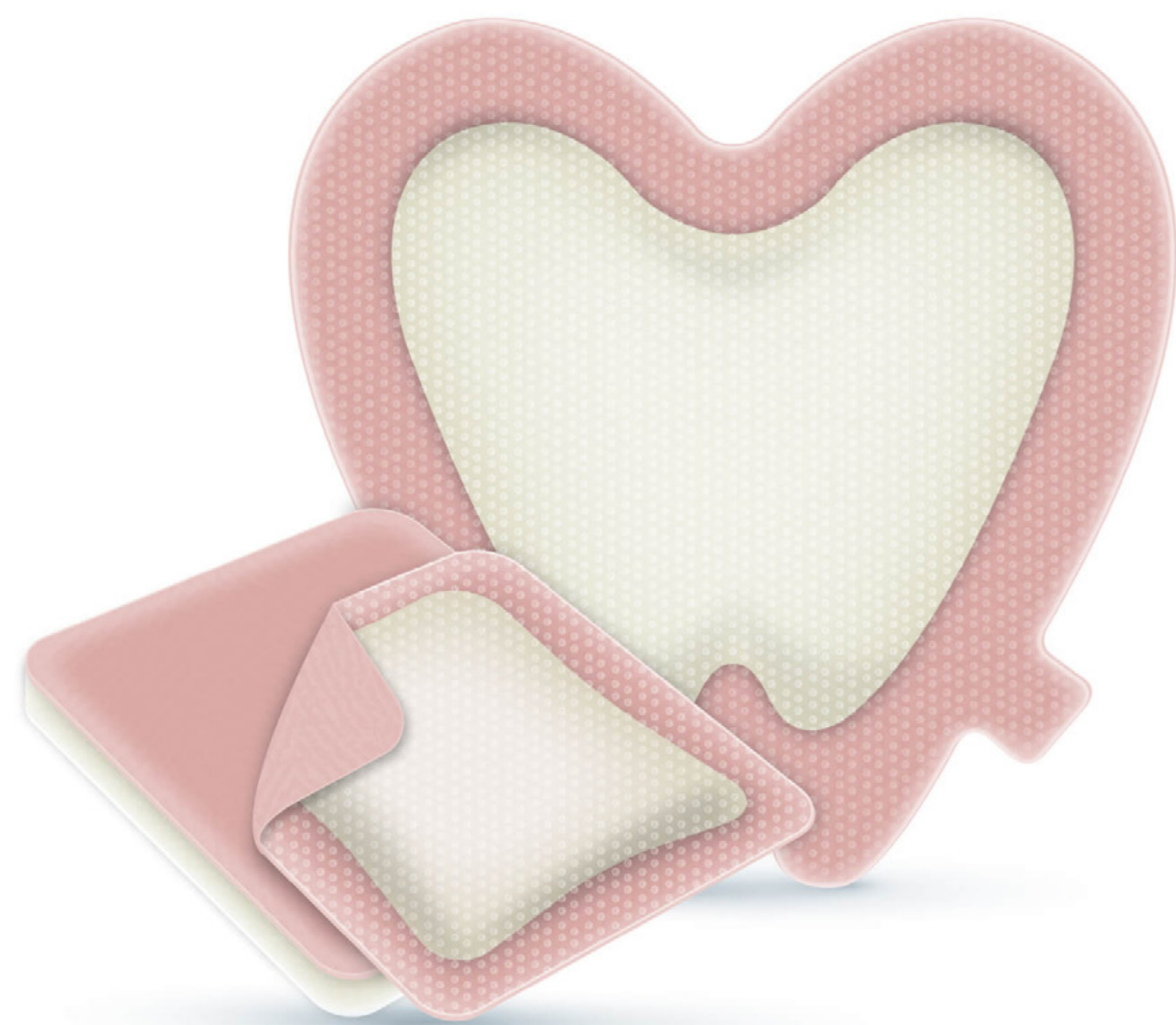


INTRODUCTION

A tracheostomy is a surgical procedure to create an opening in the front of the trachea, through the skin of the neck. A tracheostomy tube is inserted through the opening and into the trachea¹

A key element of tracheostomy management includes the assessment of peristomal skin integrity. Excessive moisture due to wound drainage, secretions, perspiration, pressure and friction from the tracheostomy collar and stabilisation ties may contribute to the break down of peristomal skin². The product selected for the management of peristomal skin needs to be highly absorbent, soft and conformable, whilst providing protection from exudate strike through.

Within the NHS, dressing selection rationale should be focused on a balance between safety, efficacy,



appropriateness and cost. The individual cost of the product and the frequency of dressing changes may effect the total cost of the treatment³. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the performance of the new ActivHeal® Tracheostomy Foam dressing in comparison to the existing tracheostomy dressing, Trachidress[†] (Kapitex Healthcare). Despite the fact that Trachidress[†] was initially low in costs, further costs accumulated due to the increase of nurses time taken when the number of aseptic dressing changes increased.

METHOD

The study was to evaluate the performance of the new ActivHeal® Tracheostomy Foam dressing.

The protocol consisted of five properties that were relevant to the performance of the dressing within a clinical environment:

- Clinical performance in comparison to Trachidress[†] • Ability to handle fluid
- Frequency of dressing change
- Ease of application
- Conformability

The nurses involved in the evaluation were asked to base their assessment of the dressing on these five properties.

RESULTS

The performance of ActivHeal® Tracheostomy Foam dressing was found to be superior than Trachidress[†]. Reduction in the incidences of peristomal complications such as maceration, excoriation, irritation and prevention of further complications were also noted. The new ActivHeal® Tracheostomy Foam dressing proved to be efficient at handling fluid, this helped reduce the frequency of dressing changes. It was observed that the dressing was conformable, easy to apply and the fenestration provided a closer fit around the tracheostomy tube. The benefits of the dressing prevented complications such as pressure and friction from the tracheostomy collar and stabilisation ties.

CONCLUSION

ActivHeal® Tracheostomy Foam dressings demonstrated a superior clinical performance when compared with Trachidress[†]. As a result of this evaluation the Intensive Care Unit will continue to use ActivHeal® Tracheostomy Foam. It provides the clinician with a simple means of reducing NHS spending whilst not compromising the quality of patient care.

References

- 1) Brooker, C Ed. (2003) Pocket Medical Dictionary, Churchill Livingstone, 15th Edition
- 2) Russel C & Matta B (2004) Tracheostomy – A Multiprofessional Handbook. San Francisco, Greenwich Media Limited. 1st Edition.
- 3) British National Formulary 51, March 2006.

