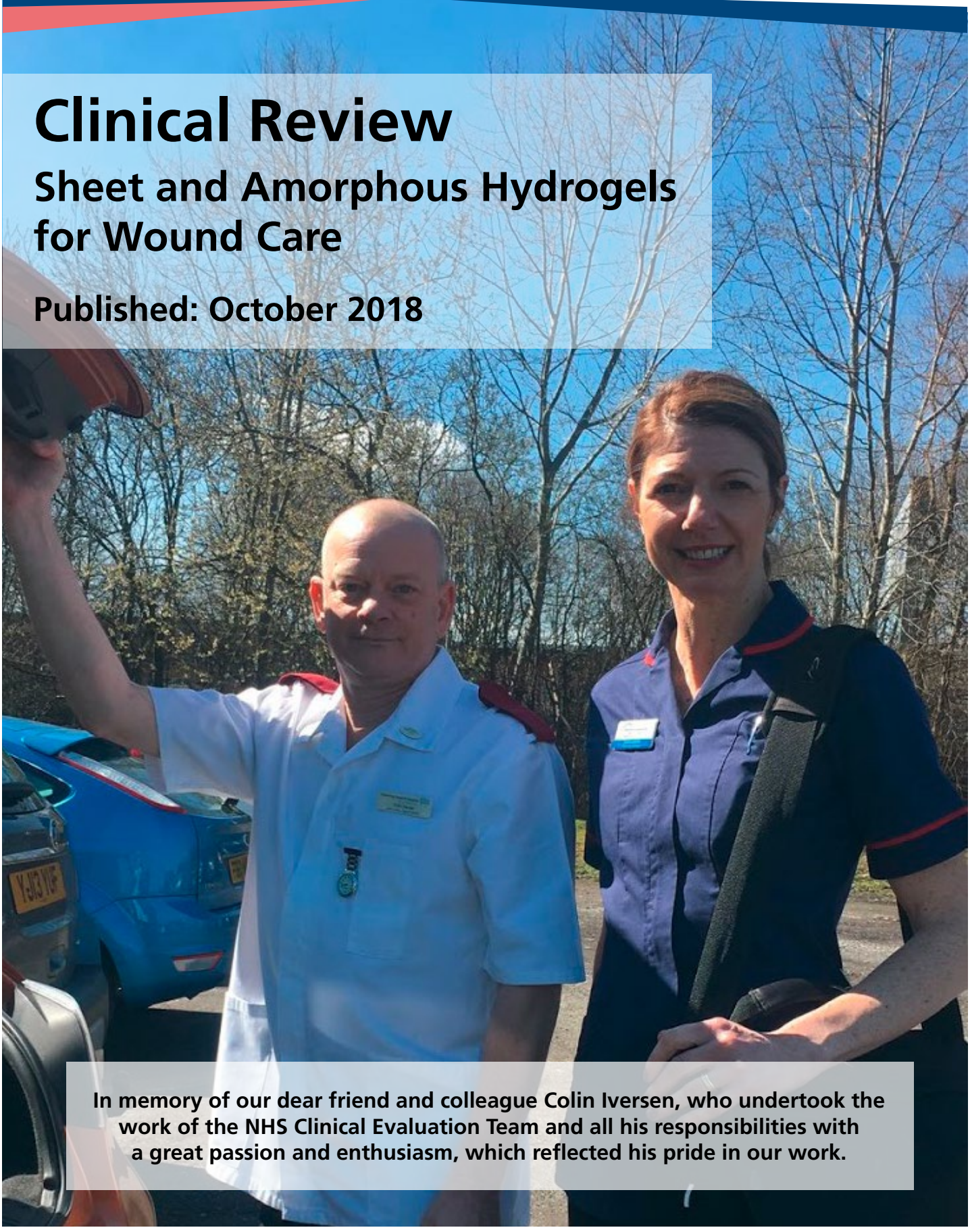
NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

Clinical Review

Sheet and Amorphous Hydrogels for Wound Care

Published: October 2018



In memory of our dear friend and colleague Colin Iversen, who undertook the work of the NHS Clinical Evaluation Team and all his responsibilities with a great passion and enthusiasm, which reflected his pride in our work.

Contents

Guidance for use

This clinical evaluation report is aimed primarily at the NHS and all those working to support patient care.

Please note that the product assessment results should only be read and used in conjunction with the full text of this clinical review.

1. Introduction

The NHS Clinical Evaluation Team was established in April 2016. The team's remit is to add independent clinical review to 'everyday healthcare consumables' used by the NHS.

Everyday healthcare consumables are products that are found in the majority of wards, clinics, health centres, treatment rooms and district nurses' bags across the NHS. The purpose of this report is two-fold: firstly, to provide a clinical assessment of the usability and requirements from the NHS for Hydrogels that are available to the NHS from the national procurement provider and secondly, to provide a clinical statement of desired functions and properties that the clinicians in the NHS require of Hydrogels for use in future procurement activities.

It is clear from the evidence that Hydrogels featured in this report, are everyday healthcare consumables that are found in most clinics or ward settings and would certainly be items included in any stock list to set up a new clinical service. On that basis, the project was approved by the Clinical Reference Board culminating in the production of this report for their approval in October 2018.

Based on 2017 data supplied by NHS Supply Chain (NHSSC) in the NHS, Trusts are using over 290,000 Hydrocolloids annually with a total spend exceeding £2 million when purchase through the prescribing route is added to direct purchase. There are 18 different product codes in the category supplied via 13 different suppliers. This report covers the range of products available as of November 2017.

Intelligence about Hydrogels was gathered from a variety of sources to provide background information on the current evidence available to support the way in which the devices are designed and clinically evaluated.

Following this, clinical engagement sessions were held with the aim of identifying important clinical criteria for Hydrogels from frontline NHS clinicians. This information was used to develop clinical criteria for Hydrogels, against which all brands available from the national procurement provider were reviewed.

Findings from these clinical reviews are collated into a product assessment report to allow users to identify products and see how they performed against the agreed clinical criteria.

A more detailed description of the team and our pathway approach can be found in the NHS Clinical Evaluation Team operating manual which can be found on our website at: www.supplychain.nhs.uk/cet.

2. Clinical Context

2.1 Clinical Definition and Scope

This report is concerned only with Hydrogels used in complex or chronic wound care. Those intended to be used for burn injury first aid, as carriers for drugs (e.g. local anaesthetics, analgesics, topical antimicrobials or antibiotics) and as lubricants are excluded.

2.2 Intended Clinical Use

The intended use of a Hydrogel is to balance the moisture level in an uninfected wound so that normal healing can take place. They do this primarily by donating fluid to rehydrate dry tissue but are also able to absorb a limited amount.

They are used on flat, dry or low exudate (wound fluid) wounds including leg ulcers, pressure ulcers, superficial burns and haematomas. They are not indicated for deep or high exudate wounds.

2.3 Clinical Practice

Hydrogels are mostly used to help the body to remove unhealthy tissue. Their role in this is to rehydrate dry tissue, which then allows the immune system to penetrate it, which isn't possible when the tissue is dry. It is important to remember that the vast majority of Hydrogels used for this have no active ingredients and do not physically dissolve or remove tissue themselves.

This immune system process is termed "autolytic debridement" or "autolysis": the body itself removing unhealthy tissue as opposed to a mechanical or applied process such as debridement with surgical instruments, chemicals or maggots.

2.4 Clinical Impact

Wounds with unhealthy or devitalised tissue in them are unable to progress to grow new tissue (heal) until that has been removed. As Hydrogels speed up this process through the mechanism described above, they are an essential tool for enabling wound healing.

2.5 Product Technical Design

There are two forms of Hydrogel currently available.

2.5.1. Amorphous Hydrogels

Amorphous hydrogels are applied as a liquid gel. They vary in density/viscosity but are mostly water with the addition of a starch or polymer to thicken them. Some also contain absorbent micro-fibres.

They are held in place by being covered with a non-absorbent secondary dressing (commonly an adhesive film) so that the water content can only go into the wound rather than the secondary dressing.

2.5.2. Sheet Hydrogels

Sheet hydrogels are also primarily made of water with a substance added to increase density. However, unlike amorphous gels, they are presented as a cohesive, flexible sheet, usually with a vapour permeable film backing to reduce loss of their water through evaporation to air.

Some of these have adhesive borders to stick the dressing to the skin around the wound whilst others need a secondary dressing (typically a bandage or adhesive film) to keep them in place.

3. Pathway Methods

The evaluation followed the process given in the CET operating manual and as approved by the overseeing Clinical Reference Board.

3.1 Intelligence Gathering

In preparation of the criteria, account has been taken of academic and related clinical evidence, known guidance and nationally recognised publications as further described in this Section 3.

3.1.1. Literature search

A literature search has been undertaken to establish what current academic knowledge exists on the products for evaluation. It should be noted that the team have not conducted a comprehensive or systematic review of literature. However, the team have interrogated the information to look for common themes which supported the development of the clinical criteria.

Initially, an evidence search was performed across the NICE service: https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/ then extended using an Open Athens account. This suggested best practice considerations in the use of Hydrogels within multiple articles describing how advanced dressings should be used and their benefits when compared to more traditional “basic” approaches such as simple gauze.

The search terms used (see below) generated many returns, however, there was little new information generated. There was some information provided by six Cochrane Reviews, however these primarily compared Hydrogels to other debridement methodologies, some of which have been discredited (e.g. wet to dry gauze for debridement) or they measured total time to healing as opposed to the specific phase of healing in which Hydrogels are indicated. All concluded that the evidence base for all aspects of advanced wound care is not yet fully developed.

Search criteria	Databases searched
• Hydrogel AND wound (in Title) • Wound (in Title) AND Wound (in abstract) • Wound (in Title) AND Hydrogel (all fields) • Hydrogel AND Dressing (all fields)	• **NICE website Evidence search** https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/ • **NICE website journals and databases** https://www.nice.org.uk/about/what-we-do/evidence-services/journals-and-databases (using Healthcare databases advanced search tool – Science Direct, Clinical key, ProQuest, Wiley Online Library, Ovid, EMBASE, Medline, CINAHL) • **Further search of specialist resources including**: NICE, SIGN, All Wales Tissue Viability Nurses Forum, World Wide Wounds, Wounds International, Woundsource and Wounds UK
Date Range	**Since 2007**
Language	**English**

Figure 1. Literature and other sources searches – **Hydrogels in Wound Care**

3.1.2. National procurement provider specification

As the national procurement provider, NHS Supply Chain manages a framework of suppliers who are then listed in the national catalogue. The framework covers a wider selection of products than just Hydrogels

The specification used by the national provider (NHS Supply Chain) has been reviewed to understand what has previously been asked of suppliers of these devices.

The specification, as used by the NHS national procurement provider (NHS Supply Chain) gives insufficient detail relating to the clinical criteria relevant for Hydrogels but is considered in the process for the development of such criteria.

3.1.3. National and international safety and quality standards

Account has also been taken of appropriate international and other standards as they pertain to the devices (e.g. from the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), European Standards (EN) and/or British Standards Institution (BSI). A review of Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) alerts has also been performed. The MHRA website (https://www.gov.uk/drug-device-alerts) returned no product alerts relating to this product category against the search terms previously described.

Medical Device Directive 93/42/EEC as amended, currently in transition to the new Medical Device Regulation MDR 2017/745

- All products classified as a Medical Device must have their CE marking clearly evident on the product and/or packaging and meet the requirements set out within the standard(s) related to labelling.

3.1.4. Product suppliers and manufacturers

All suppliers listed within the national framework were invited to submit relevant evidence, product information and testing data to help support the review. This was guided by provision of a standardised data set to promote return of relevant and consistent information such as:

- Product description and medical device classification.
- Copies of certificates of conformity to relevant EN and ISO standards
    - **EN ISO 13485:2016**. Quality management systems for medical devices
    - **BS EN ISO 14001**. Environmental management systems
- Copy of declaration of conformity to **MDD 93/42EEC** or **MDR 2017/745**.
- Technical data sheets.
- Details of adverse incident reports (if any have occurred)
- Copies of company protocols for product recalls and actions should these be necessary.
- Indications for use and precautions/contra-indications for use.
- Any potential allergens the product contains.
- Range available.
- Instructions for use.
- Shelf life of product.

- Any existing clinical evidence or laboratory testing to support product quality and effectiveness.

Some suppliers provided additional evidence such as **BS EN ISO 9001** (quality management systems).

The information provided confirmed that all products on catalogue met the requirements for a Hydrogel suitable for use in wound care, but submitted case studies, posters and other publications did not add to the knowledge found in the literature search.

3.1.5. Quality of evidence

Hierarchy of evidence

Levels of evidence sometimes referred to as hierarchy of evidence are assigned to studies based on the methodological quality of their design, validity, and applicability to patient care.

In relation to Hydrogels, no evidence above level 5 (see Figure 2) was found during literature search or suppliers' submissions.

Hierarchy ranking	Description
Level 1	A systematic review of all relevant randomised controlled trials (RCT) or evidence-based clinical practice guidelines based on systematic reviews of RCT evidence
Level 2	Evidence from at least one well designed RCT
Level 3	Evidence from well-designed controlled trials; non-randomised, quasi experimental
Level 4	Well-designed case control & cohort studies
Level 5	Systematic reviews of descriptive and qualitative studies
Level 6	Evidence from a single, descriptive or qualitative study
Level 7	Evidence from the opinion of authorities and/or reports of expert committees

Figure 2. Hierarchy ranking: Evidence based practice in nursing & healthcare: a guide to best practice" (B.M. Melnyk & E. Fineout-Overholt; 2005; p10)

3.2 Best Practice Guidelines

There are a variety of published peer reviewed articles and guidelines relevant to HCDs and their use. The key recent publications are from Wounds UK (Ousey et al, 2012) and Wounds International (Queen, online undated) who look at the history and current use of these products explaining their place in wound care.

Further authors have looked at wound care formulary construction and development identifying inclusion of HCDs within these (Wounds UK, 2008) and there are many local guidelines produced by individual or aligned NHS providers which include information on selecting the correct dressing type including for Hydrogels.

Professional organisations have produced guidance specific to certain types of wounds (e.g. Wounds International, 2017; RCN, 2008). There is no national generic or specific guidance on principles of wound care and appropriate use of dressings from NICE.

However, NHS England has introduced a quality requirement to improve wound assessment (and therefore more appropriate use of wound care products) for community-based NHS health care providers (NHS England, 2016a).

3.3 Patient Perspectives

Chronic wounds are prevalent in the UK with an annual cost to the NHS of over £5 billion (Guest et al, 2015) and often cause patients to suffer pain, discomfort, social isolation, loss of sleep and depression (Upton, 2014).

Assessment by competent care providers and provision of individualised care reduces the time to healing with commensurate reduction in negative impact on patients and has become a nationally set area for improvement (NHS England, 2016b).

4. NHS Clinical Engagement

In order to develop a shared vision of what is required from Hydrogels several methods of engagement were used. These events were used to formulate thoughts, ideas and needs from different clinicians familiar with these products; identifying their own expectation(s) of the product for their given patient group, and intended patient outcome, being used in a variety of differing clinical environments.

Mapping exercises were undertaken to determine personnel that should be involved and/or consulted regarding these products. This stage of the report focused on clinical staff that are:

a) recognised as subject experts, and/or
b) recognised regular users of the devices in their clinical practice.

Various methods of engagement were undertaken to ensure these clinical opinions were robust, and validated by peers from around the country, options of engagement included:

- Regional and national face-to-face events with NHS clinical colleagues
- Focussed visits to NHS clinicians regional and national face-to-face events
- Website subscription
- Attendance at specialist network events
- Attendance at NHS Business Services Authority events
- Web-based surveys and e-engagement tools (e.g. email, WebEx, portal based surveys)

4.1 Clinical Conversations

To build a broad caucus of attendees at our events letters were sent inviting Trusts to nominate clinical colleagues to attend a series of regional group events. These were hosted by NHS organisations throughout England to enable the widest possible access for all invited. This ensured to set aside any pre-existing regional variance.

Details of the discussion outcomes were recorded using an online survey which was also circulated to specialist Tissue Viability Nurses via regional specialist networks. Information returned form both of these sources was combined and then used together with the evidence gathered at the previous project stage to inform a list of clinical criteria against which the products have been tested.

4.2 Clinical Criteria

The data received from all the NHS clinical conversation events, alongside the data collected from individual experts, was assimilated into a series of clinical criteria.

A clinical criterion is defined for the purposes of this report as a principle or standard by which products may be evaluated. It is a statement which describes the clinician's requirements for the product.

The proposed criteria were validated by workshop attendees and all other clinical experts engaged in the development process. In addition, other clinical experts who are likely to add further useful insight were also included, leading to the finalised clinical criteria given in Figures 3 and 4.

4.2.1. Criteria explanation- Inclusion (Hydrogels)

To enhance the readers understanding of this report, and to provide value to the results, an explanation for the defined clinical criteria is captured.

INCLUSION CLINICAL CRITERIA – AMORPHOUS HYDROGELS	
CRITERIA	**RATIONALE**
Packaging	
Name of product (brand) is given on the box	Our consultation found that this is considered essential information
Dressing size is given on the box	Our consultation found that this is considered essential information
Number contained is given on the box	Our consultation found that this is considered essential information
Points above are printed on the side of the box	Packaging must be able to be stored sideways and still identify the contents
The box is just big enough to hold the contents	Many clinical areas have limited storage space

Indications for use are given on the box or instructions for use (leaflet)	Reduces potential for misuse or mistakes leading to delayed healing or waste
Single use is stated on the box	Reduces potential for misuse and risk of contamination or infection
There are application instructions on the gel dispenser	It is unlikely that the box/leaflet will be at the patient's side when the product is applied. Promotes safe use
Opening	
Box opens by hand, not taped, no scissors needed	Users told us that this saves time and simplifies opening as well as reducing the likelihood of damage to the box
Box has no sharp edges	Reduces risk of injury when opening. We have been told that 'paper cuts' can occur from handling packaging
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	Reduces risk of the box losing integrity leading to spillage with multiple uses
Able to remove one dispenser at a time	Reduces potential for waste if due to spillage
Dispenser can be opened whilst maintaining sterility	Reduces risk of contamination or introduction of infection
Gel doesn't spill when opening dispenser	Reduces risk of wasted product and/or potential slipping/falls risk
The dispenser can't be resealed (to prevent multiple use)	Reduces risk of contamination or introducing infection during multiple uses
Clinical Use	
The gel can be applied using one hand without undue exertion	Simplifies application. Other hand may be needed to support patient or hold other equipment
The gel can be applied without the nozzle touching the wound	Reduces risk of wound contamination or introducing infection from outer edge of nozzle
The gel can be irrigated away using standard solutions (saline or water)	Specialist solutions are not always available. Allows uncomplicated use in a wide range of environments
Disposal	
The outer box can be recycled	Waste management and government policies are increasingly requiring this

The dispenser can be recycled **(or)**	Waste management and government policies are increasingly requiring this
The dispenser can be disposed of in general waste	For those providing care in patients' homes, clinical waste management can be difficult

Figure 3. Defining the inclusion clinical criteria for **Amorphous Hydrogels**

INCLUSION CLINICAL CRITERIA – SHEET HYDROGELS	
CRITERIA	**RATIONALE**
Packaging	
Name of product (brand) is given on the box	Our consultation found that this is considered essential information
Dressing size is given on the box	Our consultation found that this is considered essential information
Number contained is given on the box	Our consultation found that this is considered essential information
Points above are printed on the side of the box	Packaging must be able to be stored sideways and still identify the contents
The box is just big enough to hold the contents	Many clinical areas have limited storage space
Indications for use are given on the box or instructions for use (leaflet)	Reduces potential for misuse or mistakes leading to delayed healing or waste
Single use is stated on the box	Reduces potential for misuse and risk of contamination or infection
That the dressing can be cut is stated on the box	Promotes awareness of properties and correct use of product
The product name (brand) is given on the individual peel pack	Promotes selection of correct product first time so avoiding waste if the wrong one is taken
The dressing size is given on the peel pack	Promotes selection of correct product first time so avoiding waste if the wrong one is taken
That the dressing can be cut is stated on the peel pack	Promotes awareness of properties and correct use of product
One side of the peel pack is transparent allowing the dressing to be seen	Promotes selection of correct product first time so avoiding waste if the wrong one is taken

Opening	
Box opens by hand, not taped, no scissors needed	Users told us that this saves time and simplifies opening as well as reducing the likelihood of damage to the box
Box has no sharp edges	Reduces risk of injury when opening. We have been told that 'paper cuts' can occur from handling packaging
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	Reduces risk of the box losing integrity leading to spillage with multiple uses
Able to remove one dressing at a time	Reduces potential for waste if due to spillage
The peel pack has an indication of where to open or this is obvious	Saves time and simplifies opening - productive working
The peel pack is easy to grip and open	Promotes confidence for both carer and patient
The peel pack allows dispensing without compromising sterility	Reduces risk of waste if sterile field is missed. Reduces risk of contamination or introduction of infection
Clinical Use	
Dressing application is intuitive and can be done without referring to instructions	Reduces the risk of waste or misapplication. Promotes confidence for both carer and patient
The dressing conforms to a variety of body shapes (including if cut to do so)	Promotes maximum fluid donation and reduces risk of contamination or infection
The dressing can be applied without sticking to itself (bordered only)	Reduces the risk of waste when handling the dressing
Disposal	
The outer box can be recycled	Waste management and government policies are increasingly requiring this
The peel pack can be recycled **(or)**	Waste management and government policies are increasingly requiring this
The peel pack can be disposed of in general waste	For those providing care in patients' homes, clinical waste management can be difficult

Figure 4- Defining the inclusion clinical criteria for **Sheet Hydrogels**

4.2.2. Criteria explanation- Exclusion (Hydrogels)

To capture true representation of clinical opinion, this report also aims to capture criteria that were raised in consultation, but not included as final criteria (with reasons why) when the evaluation of Hydrogels took place (see Figures 5 and 6).

EXCLUSION CLINICAL CRITERIA – AMORPHOUS HYDROGELS	
CRITERIA	**RATIONALE**
Clinical Use	
The gel doesn't leave a residue on removal	It is not possible to measure this: if residue is such that it can't actually be seen, or; to accurately measure the actual amount.
Disposal	
The box can be folded or crushed to reduce space in waste	This is dependent on individuals' physical strength so is highly subjective

Figure 5. Defining the exclusion clinical criteria for **Amorphous Hydrogels**

EXCLUSION CLINICAL CRITERIA – SHEET HYDROGELS	
CRITERIA	**RATIONALE**
Opening	
The peel pack can be opened when gloved	Gloves do not need to be worn for this. It should be done when preparing for the dressing application not during it.
Clinical Use	
The dressing is trauma free on removal	It is not possible to properly measure this with the volunteers available. If the dressing were to cause trauma to a patient this would breach ethical considerations.
The dressing is pain free on removal	It is not possible to measure this with the volunteers available. If the dressing were to cause pain when applied to a patient this would breach ethical considerations.
The dressing doesn't degrade during use	It is not possible to: measure this if degradation is such that it can't actually be seen, or; to accurately measure the actual amount.

Disposal	
The box can be folded or crushed to reduce space in waste	This is dependent on individuals' physical strength so is highly subjective
Disposal of the dressing after use	The dressing is clinical waste. Follow local policy.

Figure 6. Defining the exclusion clinical criteria for **Sheet Hydrogels**

4.3 Product Evaluation

Evaluation methodologies are defined for each and every clinical criterion. They reflect a simulated clinical environment.

Wherever possible, products were supplied in a 'ward ready' unit of issue as would be found by clinical staff on accessing a store area in their clinical environment. Where this has not been possible it was acknowledged as part of the product assessment results matrix.

The tests were formulated to move through the key aspects of product use using the NHS Clinical Evaluation Team product cycle:

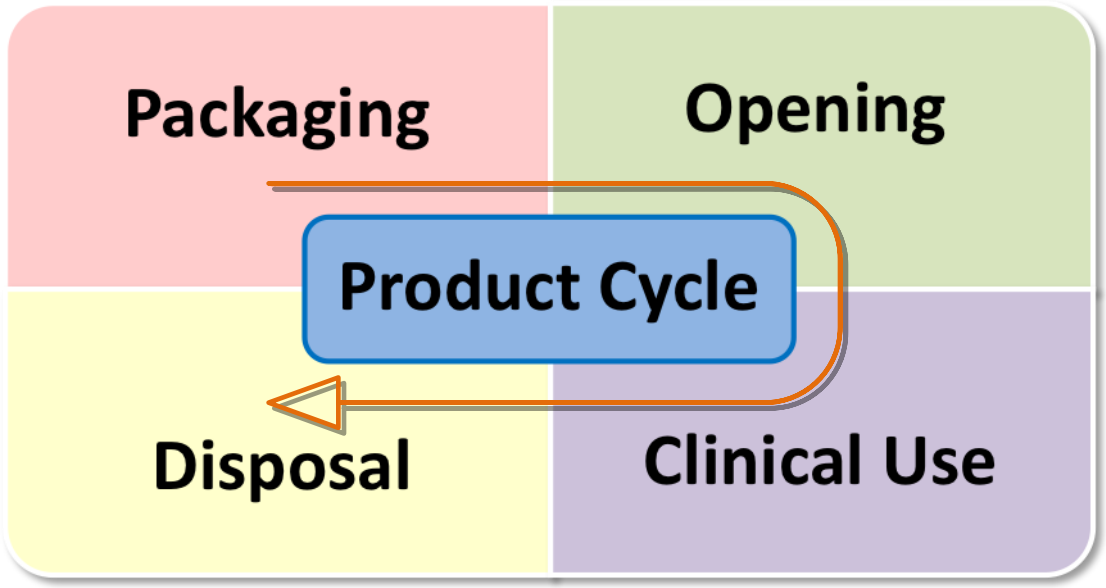


Figure 7 – NHS Clinical Evaluation Team Product Cycle

The evaluation product was ordered and picked from the NHS distribution centres. Products evaluated have been stored post evaluation for a period of three months after publication of this review.

Practicing NHS clinical staff were invited to review the products in accordance with the developed criteria. It was not possible to 'blind' the evaluations in the sense that the evaluators were necessarily aware of the product brand; however, the product to

be evaluated was independently picked in accordance with the product selection criteria in Section 2 and prepared for evaluation by colleagues who were not otherwise involved in the process.

Each clinical evaluator entered data independently and without inter-rater comparison into their own workbook. These were then collated, reviewed and summarised by the clinical specialist lead for the project.

As part of the evaluation preparation, each evaluator was given a more detailed and product specific definition for each of the scores

The defined criteria either prompted a 'yes/no' answer, which has been represented with a √ **/ X,** or a score was given between 0 and 3, or 0 and 2 as follows:

Score	Meaning
0	**This does not meet the criteria**
1	**This partially meets the criteria**
2	**This meets the criteria**
3	**This exceeds the criteria**

Figure 8 – NHS Clinical Evaluation Team scoring methods

These numerical scores across all evaluators were totalled and a mean value determined. This mean value has then been converted into a star rating (see matrix below).

The mean values convert to a star rating in accordance with the following table:

Point scored			Star value	
0	**to**	**0.99**	**0**	**stars**
1	**to**	**1.24**	**1**	**Star**
1.25	**to**	**1.74**	**1.5**	**Stars**
1.75	**to**	**2.24**	**2**	**Stars**
2.25	**to**	**2.74**	**2.5**	**Stars**
2.75	**to**	**3**	**3**	**Stars**

Figure 9 – conversion of mean scores to star rating

The above scoring mechanisms will not be followed where the criterion identified by the CET cannot reasonably exceed expectations. For example, if the clinical criterion was whether the removal of an adhesive dressing was atraumatic and with the individual patient reporting no pain or skin damage, then it cannot reasonably be expected that a product could exceed that criteria. Therefore, in such circumstances, the relevant criteria will be based on the scoring regime of:

a. If the criterion is a Yes/No response, the responses will be converted into aggregate percentages and then star ratings as follows:

Percentages (Yes)	Star value
0% to 24.99%	0 star
25% to 49.99%	1 star
50% to 74.99%	1.5 stars
75% to 100%	2 stars

Figure 10 – Percentage scores to star rating

b. For other subjective criteria, the responses will be converted into mean scores and then star ratings as follows:

Point scored	Star value
0.00 to 0.99	0 star
1.00 to 1.24	1 star
1.24 to 1.74	1.5 stars
1.75 to 2.00	2 stars

Figure 11 – Points scores to star rating

On the basis that clinical evaluators will be providing scores as follows:

- 0 stars – Does not meet the criteria
- 1 star – Partially meets the criteria
- 2 stars – Meets the criteria

All supplemental products used in the evaluation are in use in the NHS and available through the national catalogue (i.e. mannequins used to simulate clinical practice).

Evaluators were also encouraged to record comments where they felt it necessary to provide rationale for their scoring and answers.

The results obtained have been validated by the NHS Clinical Evaluation Team moderation committee for consistency of scoring and interpretation. These results are presented in the product assessment reports herein.

5. Product Assessment Results

The following product assessment results pages show the tested clinical criteria listed horizontally on the left-hand side of the page with the tested device found vertically across the top of the matrix. The accompanying photographs were taken during evaluation. These photographs are of sample products provided for evaluation. Lot numbers were recorded and samples have been retained in storage following the completion of evaluation.

The products represented are the range of suppliers and brands available through the NHS national procurement provider's framework as of August 2016.

Results can be seen within the product matrix. Each clinical product has been given a star rating and the evaluator's collated comments are included in the matrix.

The product assessment results have been divided into 2 sub-categories of Hydrogel, as follows:

- Amorphous hydrogel
- Non-adhesive and adhesive sheet hydrogel

5.1 Laboratory Test Results

Hydrogels – Fluid Donation

The primary use of hydrogel dressings in the UK is to donate fluid to the wound site. These dressings are often placed on dry wounds to soften and breakdown hard eschars, necrotic tissue and devitalised tissue.

The ability of hydrogel dressings to donate fluid was assessed using a method based on the BS EN 13726-1. The laboratory results show the percentage change in the dressing weight when incubated with a simulated wound substrate (gelatine). A positive percentage result shows that the dressing donated fluid to the gelatine wound substrate. A negative percentage result indicates that the hydrogel did not donate fluid, and rather absorbed fluid from the wound substrate.

6. Using the Product Assessment Results Matrix

The clinical criteria displayed are designed to capture key clinical elements that health professionals may wish to consider when reviewing/selecting products for their own clinical practice. The report is intended as a guidance tool to aid product selection and is not intended to be a universal determination of the clinical effectiveness of any particular product. Each clinical practitioner should therefore make their own assessments taking into account all relevant considerations for their particular situation.

Not all clinical criteria cited in the report will be relevant or important in all environments,

i.e. Ability to dispose of liquid hydrogel applicators in general waste.

i.e. In some hospitals and institutions, local policies may allow or advocate uncomplicated disposal of liquid hydrogel dispensers as clinical waste.

Clinicians may identify the criteria that most represent their clinical environment and patient demographic, and may choose to build their own hierarchy of importance to aid product(s) selection for patient outcome goals using the matrix presented in this

SHEET HYDROGELS

NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
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	B BRAUN MEDICAL LTD	
NPC	**ELE 029**	**ELE 035**
MPC	**0072888T**	**7261002**
BRAND	**Askina Thinsite**	**Askina Touch**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel dressing adhesive**	**Hydrogel dressing non-adhesive**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**10x10cm**	**10x10cm**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	Product not available at the time of evaluation	Product not available at the time of evaluation
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX		
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX		
Points above on side of box		
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger than contents)		
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)		
Dressing can be cut stated (Box or IFU. State which)		
Visibility of product name on peel pack		
Visibility of product size on peel pack		
Visibility of "can be cut" on peel pack		
One side transparent allowing contents to be seen		
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	Product not available at the time of evaluation	Product not available at the time of evaluation
Box has no sharp edges		
Box closes securely to prevent spillage		
Able to remove one item at a time		
Peel pack has indication where to open or this is obvious		
Peel pack is easy to grip and peel		
Dispenses maintaining sterility		
Application functionality	Product not available at the time of evaluation	Product not available at the time of evaluation
Conforms to patient shape		
Applies without sticking to itself (BORDERED ONLY)		
Fluid Affinity (% decreas in weight)		
Can the outer box be recycled?	Product not available at the time of evaluation	Product not available at the time of evaluation
Can the peel pack be recycled?		
Can the peel pack be put in general waste?		

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable
** additional sizes are available for some products

SHEET HYDROGELS

NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

	CRAWFORD PHARMACEUTICALS	
		
NPC	**EME 082**	**EME 085**
MPC	**CWL1005**	**CWL1008**
BRAND	**Kerralite Cool**	**Kerralite Cool Border**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel dressing non-adhesive**	**Hydrogel dressing adhesive**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**Superabsorbent hydrated pro ionic gel without adhesive 12x8.5cm**	**Superabsorbent hydrated pro ionic gel with adhesive border 11x11cm**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Points above on side of box	✓	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger than contents)	✓	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓	✓
Dressing can be cut stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓	✗
Visibility of product name on peel pack	★★ (1.86)*	★★ (1.86)*
Visibility of product size on peel pack	★★ (1.71)*	★★ (1.57)*
Visibility of "can be cut" on peel pack	★★ (0.00)*	★★ (0.00)*
One side transparent allowing contents to be seen	★★ (0.00)*	★★ (0.00)*
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (1.86)*	★★ (1.86)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓	✓
Peel pack has indication where to open or this is obvious	★★ (1.00)*	★★ (1.29)*
Peel pack is easy to grip and peel	★★ (1.57)*	★★ (1.71)*
Dispenses maintaining sterility	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Application functionality	★★★ (2.71)	★★★ (2.43)
Conforms to patient shape	★★ (1.86)*	★★ (1.57)*
Applies without sticking to itself (BORDERED ONLY)	N/A	★★ (1.71)*
Fluid Affinity (% decreas in weight)	–20.00 (SD 4.8)	–20.00 (SD 4.8)
Can the outer box be recycled?	✓	✓
Can the peel pack be recycled?	✗	✗
Can the peel pack be put in general waste?	✗	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable
** additional sizes are available for some products

SHEET HYDROGELS

NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

	DERMA SCIENCES EUROPE LTD	
		
NPC	**ELM 195**	**ELM 184**
MPC	**86466**	**86344**
BRAND	**Extrasorb HCS**	**Extrasorb HCS**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel dressing adhesive**	**Hydrogel dressing non-adhesive**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel colloidal sheet dressing with superabsorbent polymers adhesive 15cm x 15cm (wcp 11.5cm x 11.5cm)**	**Hydrogel colloidal sheet dressing with superabsorbent polymers non adhesive 11cm x 11cm**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Points above on side of box	✓	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger than contents)	✓	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓	✓
Dressing can be cut stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✗	✗
Visibility of product name on peel pack	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Visibility of product size on peel pack	★★ (1.71)*	★★ (1.71)*
Visibility of "can be cut" on peel pack	★★ (0.00)*	★★ (0.00)*
One side transparent allowing contents to be seen	★★ (0.00)*	★★ (0.00)*
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (1.14)*	★★ (1.71)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓	✓
Peel pack has indication where to open or this is obvious	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Peel pack is easy to grip and peel	★★ (1.86)*	★★ (1.86)*
Dispenses maintaining sterility	★★ (1.86)*	★★ (2.00)*
Application functionality	★★★ (2.57)	★★★ (2.71)
Conforms to patient shape	★★ (1.57)*	★★ (1.86)*
Applies without sticking to itself (BORDERED ONLY)	★★ (1.43)*	N/A
Fluid Affinity (% decreas in weight)	–115.52 (SD 3.7)	–115.52 (SD 3.7)
Can the outer box be recycled?	✗	✗
Can the peel pack be recycled?	✗	✗
Can the peel pack be put in general waste?	✗	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable
** additional sizes are available for some products

SHEET HYDROGELS

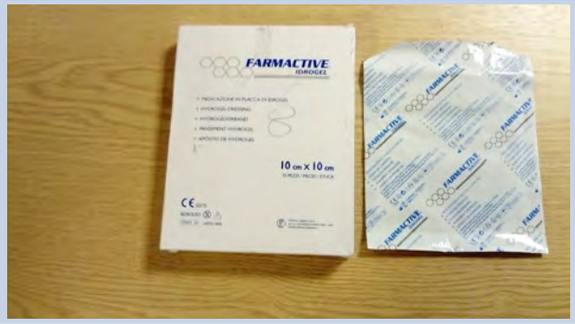
NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

	L&R MEDICAL UK LTD
	
NPC	**ELE 055**
MPC	**88301**
BRAND	**Actiform Cool**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel dressing non-adhesive**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**10x10cm square**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Points above on side of box	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger than contents)	✗
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓
Dressing can be cut stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✗
Visibility of product name on peel pack	★★½ (1.29)*
Visibility of product size on peel pack	★★ (0.00)*
Visibility of "can be cut" on peel pack	★★ (0.00)*
One side transparent allowing contents to be seen	★★ (0.00)*
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (1.86)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓
Peel pack has indication where to open or this is obvious	★★½ (1.43)*
Peel pack is easy to grip and peel	★★ (1.86)*
Dispenses maintaining sterility	★★½ (1.43)*
Application functionality	★★★ (2.86)
Conforms to patient shape	★★ (1.86)*
Applies without sticking to itself (BORDERED ONLY)	N/A
Fluid Affinity (% decreas in weight)	–6.85 (SD 3.2)
Can the outer box be recycled?	✗
Can the peel pack be recycled?	✗
Can the peel pack be put in general waste?	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable
** additional sizes are available for some products

SHEET HYDROGELS

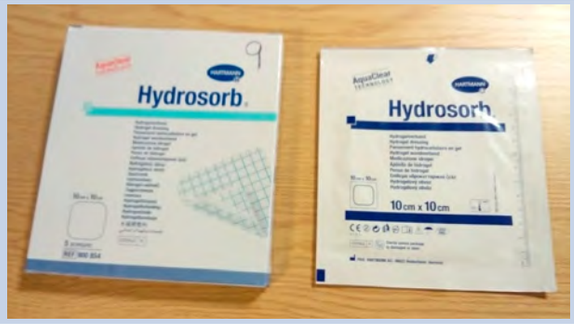
NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

	MEDICARE COLGATE (STERIFEED) LTD
	
NPC	**ELE085**
MPC	**1701501010**
BRAND	**Farmactive**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel dressing non-adhesive**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**10x10cm**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Points above on side of box	✗
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger than contents)	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓
Dressing can be cut stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✗
Visibility of product name on peel pack	★★ (1.67)*
Visibility of product size on peel pack	★★ (0.00)*
Visibility of "can be cut" on peel pack	★★ (0.00)*
One side transparent allowing contents to be seen	★★ (0.00)*
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (1.57)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (1.83)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓
Peel pack has indication where to open or this is obvious	★★½ (1.17)*
Peel pack is easy to grip and peel	★★½ (1.14)*
Dispenses maintaining sterility	★★ (1.71)*
Application functionality	★★★½ (2.43)
Conforms to patient shape	★★½ (1.43)*
Applies without sticking to itself (BORDERED ONLY)	N/A
Fluid Affinity (% decreas in weight)	4.25 (SD 2.0)
Can the outer box be recycled?	✓
Can the peel pack be recycled?	✓
Can the peel pack be put in general waste?	✗

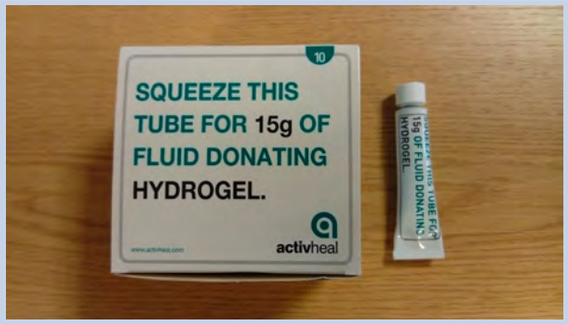
* maximum number of 2 stars attainable
** additional sizes are available for some products

SHEET HYDROGELS

NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

	PAUL HARTMANN LTD	
		
NPC	**ELE012**	**ELE 014**
MPC	**900854**	**900723**
BRAND	**Hydrosorb**	**Hydrosorb Comfort**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel dressing non-adhesive**	**Hydrogel dressing adhesive**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**10x10cm**	**12.5cm x 12.5cm square (wcp 8cm x 8cm plus border 2.25cm)**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Points above on side of box	✓	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger than contents)	✓	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓	✓
Dressing can be cut stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✗	✗
Visibility of product name on peel pack	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Visibility of product size on peel pack	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Visibility of "can be cut" on peel pack	☆☆ (0.00)*	☆☆ (0.00)*
One side transparent allowing contents to be seen	☆☆ (0.00)*	☆☆ (0.00)*
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (1.83)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓	✓
Peel pack has indication where to open or this is obvious	★★ (1.86)*	★★ (1.71)*
Peel pack is easy to grip and peel	★½ (1.29)*	★½ (1.29)*
Dispenses maintaining sterility	★★ (1.86)*	★★ (1.86)*
Application functionality	★★½ (2.57)	★★☆ (2.14)
Conforms to patient shape	★★ (1.57)*	★★ (1.50)*
Applies without sticking to itself (BORDERED ONLY)	N/A	★½ (1.33)*
Fluid Affinity (% decreas in weight)	15.56 (SD 1.1)	15.56 (SD 1.1)
Can the outer box be recycled?	✓	✓
Can the peel pack be recycled?	✓	✓
Can the peel pack be put in general waste?	✗	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable
** additional sizes are available for some products

	ADVANCED MEDICAL SOLUTIONS PLYMOUTH) LTD
LIQUID HYDROGEL NHS Clinical Evaluation Team by the NHS, for the NHS	
NPC	**ELG 018**
MPC	**10007419**
BRAND	**Activheal Hydrogel**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel gel**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**15g**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Points above on side of box	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger tHan contents)	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓ (Box)
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (1.86)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓
There are application instructions on the dispenser	★☆☆ (1.00)
Single use is clearly stated	✓
Dispenser can be opened maintaining sterility	★☆ (0.57)*
Gel doesn't accidentally dispense during opening	★★ (2.00)*
Not re-sealable to prevent multiple use	☆☆ (0.43)*
Can be applied using one hand	★½☆ (1.43)
Able to apply without the nozzle touching the wound	57%
Able to be removed using standard solutions (saline or water) easily found in IFU	50%
Can the outer box be recycled?	✗
Can the dispenser be recycled?	✗
Can the dispenser be put in general waste?	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable

LIQUID HYDROGEL

NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
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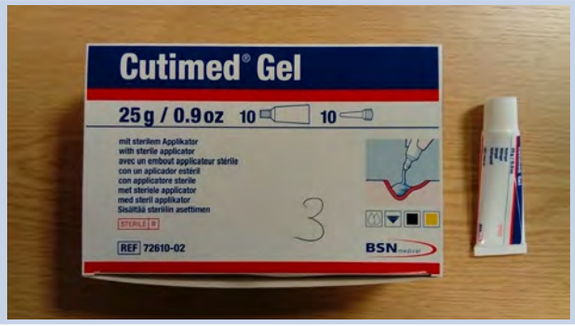
	ASPEN MEDICAL (EUROPE) LTD
	
NPC	**ELG 030**
MPC	**1419C**
BRAND	**Aquaform**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel gel**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**15g**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Points above on side of box	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger tHan contents)	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓ (IFU)
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (2.00)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓
There are application instructions on the dispenser	★☆☆ (1.00)
Single use is clearly stated	✓
Dispenser can be opened maintaining sterility	★★ (2.00)*
Gel doesn't accidentally dispense during opening	★★ (2.00)*
Not re-sealable to prevent multiple use	★☆ (0.57)*
Can be applied using one hand	★★☆ (2.14)
Able to apply without the nozzle touching the wound	43%
Able to be removed using standard solutions (saline or water) easily found in IFU	100%
Can the outer box be recycled?	✓
Can the dispenser be recycled?	✗
Can the dispenser be put in general waste?	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable

LIQUID HYDROGEL

NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

	BSN MEDICAL LTD
	
NPC	**ELA 628**
MPC	**72610-02**
BRAND	**Cutimed Gel**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel gel**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**25g**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Points above on side of box	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger tHan contents)	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓ (IFU)
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (2.00)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓
There are application instructions on the dispenser	★☆☆ (1.00)
Single use is clearly stated	✓
Dispenser can be opened maintaining sterility	★☆ (0.86)*
Gel doesn't accidentally dispense during opening	★★ (2.00)*
Not re-sealable to prevent multiple use	☆☆ (0.43)*
Can be applied using one hand	★★☆ (2.00)
Able to apply without the nozzle touching the wound	57%
Able to be removed using standard solutions (saline or water) easily found in IFU	33%
Can the outer box be recycled?	✓
Can the dispenser be recycled?	✓
Can the dispenser be put in general waste?	✓

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable

	COLOPLAST LTD
LIQUID HYDROGEL NHS Clinical Evaluation Team by the NHS, for the NHS	
NPC	**ELG 003**
MPC	**3900**
BRAND	**Purilon gel**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel gel**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**15g**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Points above on side of box	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger than contents)	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓ (IFU)
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (1.71)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (2.00)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓
There are application instructions on the dispenser	★☆☆ (1.00)
Single use is clearly stated	✓
Dispenser can be opened maintaining sterility	★★ (2.00)*
Gel doesn't accidentally dispense during opening	★★ (1.86)*
Not re-sealable to prevent multiple use	★★ (1.86)*
Can be applied using one hand	★★☆ (1.86)
Able to apply without the nozzle touching the wound	43%
Able to be removed using standard solutions (saline or water) easily found in IFU	100%
Can the outer box be recycled?	✓
Can the dispenser be recycled?	✗
Can the dispenser be put in general waste?	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable

LIQUID HYDROGEL

NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

	CONVATEC LTD
	
NPC	**ELM 054**
MPC	**S129**
BRAND	**Granugel**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel gel**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**15g**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Points above on side of box	✗
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger tHan contents)	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓ (IFU)
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (2.00)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓
There are application instructions on the dispenser	★½ (1.43)
Single use is clearly stated	✓
Dispenser can be opened maintaining sterility	(0.43)*
Gel doesn't accidentally dispense during opening	★½ (1.29)*
Not re-sealable to prevent multiple use	★ (0.57)*
Can be applied using one hand	★½ (1.57)
Able to apply without the nozzle touching the wound	50%
Able to be removed using standard solutions (saline or water) easily found in IFU	10%
Can the outer box be recycled?	✗
Can the dispenser be recycled?	✗
Can the dispenser be put in general waste?	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable

LIQUID HYDROGEL

NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

	KCI MEDICAL LTD
	
NPC	**ELG 005**
MPC	**MNG 415**
BRAND	**Nu-Gel**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel gel**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**15g**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓
Points above on side of box	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger tHan contents)	✓
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓ (IFU)
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (2.00)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓
There are application instructions on the dispenser	★★☆ (2.00)
Single use is clearly stated	✓
Dispenser can be opened maintaining sterility	★★ (2.00)*
Gel doesn't accidentally dispense during opening	★★ (2.00)*
Not re-sealable to prevent multiple use	★☆ (1.29)*
Can be applied using one hand	★★½ (2.29)
Able to apply without the nozzle touching the wound	71%
Able to be removed using standard solutions (saline or water) easily found in IFU	100%
Can the outer box be recycled?	✓
Can the dispenser be recycled?	✗
Can the dispenser be put in general waste?	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable

LIQUID HYDROGEL

NHS Clinical Evaluation Team
by the NHS, for the NHS

	TJ SMITH & NEPHEW LIMITED	
		
NPC	**ELG 002**	**ELG 000**
MPC	**66000324**	**7311**
BRAND	**Intrasite Conformable**	**Intrasite Gel**
BASE DESCRIPTION	**Hydrogel impregnated dressing non adherent**	**Hydrogel gel**
SECONDARY DESCRIPTION	**10x10cm 7.5g gel loading**	**15g gel applipak**
CLINICAL CRITERIA	**SCORE**	**SCORE**
Name of product is clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Dressing size is clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Contents (number of) clearly visible ON BOX	✓	✓
Points above on side of box	✓	✓
BOX. Compact packaging (only just larger tHan contents)	✓	✗
Indications for use are stated (Box or IFU. State which)	✓ (IFU)	✓ (IFU)
Outer box opens by hand (no tape, no scissors needed)	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Box has no sharp edges	✓	✓
Box closes securely to prevent spillage	★★ (1.86)*	★★ (2.00)*
Able to remove one item at a time	✓	✓
There are application instructions on the dispenser	★☆☆ (1.00)	★☆☆ (1.00)
Single use is clearly stated	✓	✓
Dispenser can be opened maintaining sterility	★★ (2.00)*	★★ (2.00)*
Gel doesn't accidentally dispense during opening	N/A	★★ (2.00)*
Not re-sealable to prevent multiple use	N/A	★☆ (0.57)*
Can be applied using one hand	N/A	★★☆ (2.00)
Able to apply without the nozzle touching the wound	N/A	86%
Able to be removed using standard solutions (saline or water) easily found in IFU	N/A	100%
Can the outer box be recycled?	✓	✓
Can the dispenser be recycled?	✗	✓
Can the dispenser be put in general waste?	✗	✗

* maximum number of 2 stars attainable

report, their own clinical knowledge, as well as any other resources (including publications) to provide informed choice and transparency of their decision for product(s) being used.

7. Further Considerations and Recommendations

7.1 Future recommendations

7.1.1. Packaging

This report for future product development recommends and advocates that a products performance threshold is inherently linked to the knowledge of the clinician using it. To potentially optimise this, the Clinical Evaluation Team would recommend suppliers consider a standardisation for colour coding products by group/classification. Consideration again must be given to the primary function/wound contact layer of the dressing to best represent its group.

Product Group	Colour Coding
Hydrogels	
Hydrocolloids	
Gelling Fibres	
Films	
Non-adherent wound contact layers	
Foams	
Antimicrobials	
Absorbents	
Super absorbents	

7.1.2. Opening

Hydrogels by their nature are moist wound dressings, this can make them challenging to remove from packaging maintaining aseptic techniques, this report would suggest consideration of how these products can be easily removed would aid clinician use

7.1.3. Clinical Use

The variation in hydrogels has increased variation of product, the ability to remove backing film, potential layering of products and the variance between adhesive and non-adhesive hydrogels, such as cutting the product, or being in contact with healthy skin risks causing clinicians confusion, and ultimately not using the product to its optimal potential, simple display of the options for the specific hydrogel in a standard display would assist clinicians in selecting the most suitable product for their patient group.

7.2 Barcodes

The CET are aware of the Scan4Safety project and are aligned with the ambitions of the programme, which will deliver significant benefits in terms of patient safety and efficiency, to the NHS. The adoption of standards, driven by Scan4Safety, enables patient, product and location identification and traceability from the supply chain to the patient.

Adoption of these standards has also been shown to improve the quality of care by minimising the risk of human error.

The CET will be considering the inclusion of an evaluation criteria relating to the presence of GS1 compliant barcodes in future reports, as following our clinical conversations we have seen clinical staff asking for it to be included, but further information will be issued by the CET on this to stakeholders in advance.

8. Disclaimer

Reports published by the NHS Clinical Evaluation Team represent general guidance and the team's opinions on products are based on the clinical evaluations undertaken, using the information and clinical criteria generated from extensive stakeholder engagement in line with the team's requirements and evaluation pathway. Reports will be reviewed and updated at the team's discretion as deemed appropriate to reflect any changes.

You should make your own assessment and not take or rely on the opinions expressed by the NHS Clinical Evaluation Team, as contained in the reports, as recommendations or advice to buy or not buy (as the case may be) particular products.

The NHS Clinical Evaluation Team is not responsible for any errors or omissions, or for the results obtained from the use of the information contained in the reports. The reports are provided ‘as is’, with no guarantee of completeness, accuracy or timeliness and without representation, warranty, assurance or undertaking of any kind, express or implied, including, but not limited to fitness for a particular purpose.

The NHS Clinical Evaluation Team shall not be liable to you or anyone else for any decision made or action taken in reliance on the information contained in the reports or for any consequential, special or indirect loss.

Reports are accurate at the time of publication, any recommendations or best practice guidance should be checked for updates.

9. Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Clinical Reference Board and the NHS Clinical Evaluation Team, we would like to acknowledge the support, help and advice given by our colleagues across a range of organisations. We would particularly like to thank the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS Business Services Authority and their Communications team along with publishing partners The APS Group and, most importantly, our NHS colleagues who have supported our work.

The team would also like to acknowledge the inspiration of Mandie Sunderland who saw this opportunity and who, through her personal drive and enthusiasm, has ensured that the clinical voice and the need for quality, safety and value throughout the NHS has been heard.

10. Authors and NHS Clinical Evaluation Team Information

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‘Quality, safety and value are at the heart of our work and it’s important that we use our clinical experience to deliver high standards of care while reducing cost and waste in the NHS.’

Mandie Sunderland
Chair, Clinical Reference Board
(Governing body of the NHS Clinical Evaluation Team)