

# Use of Compression Strapping for Retromalleolar Leg Ulcers

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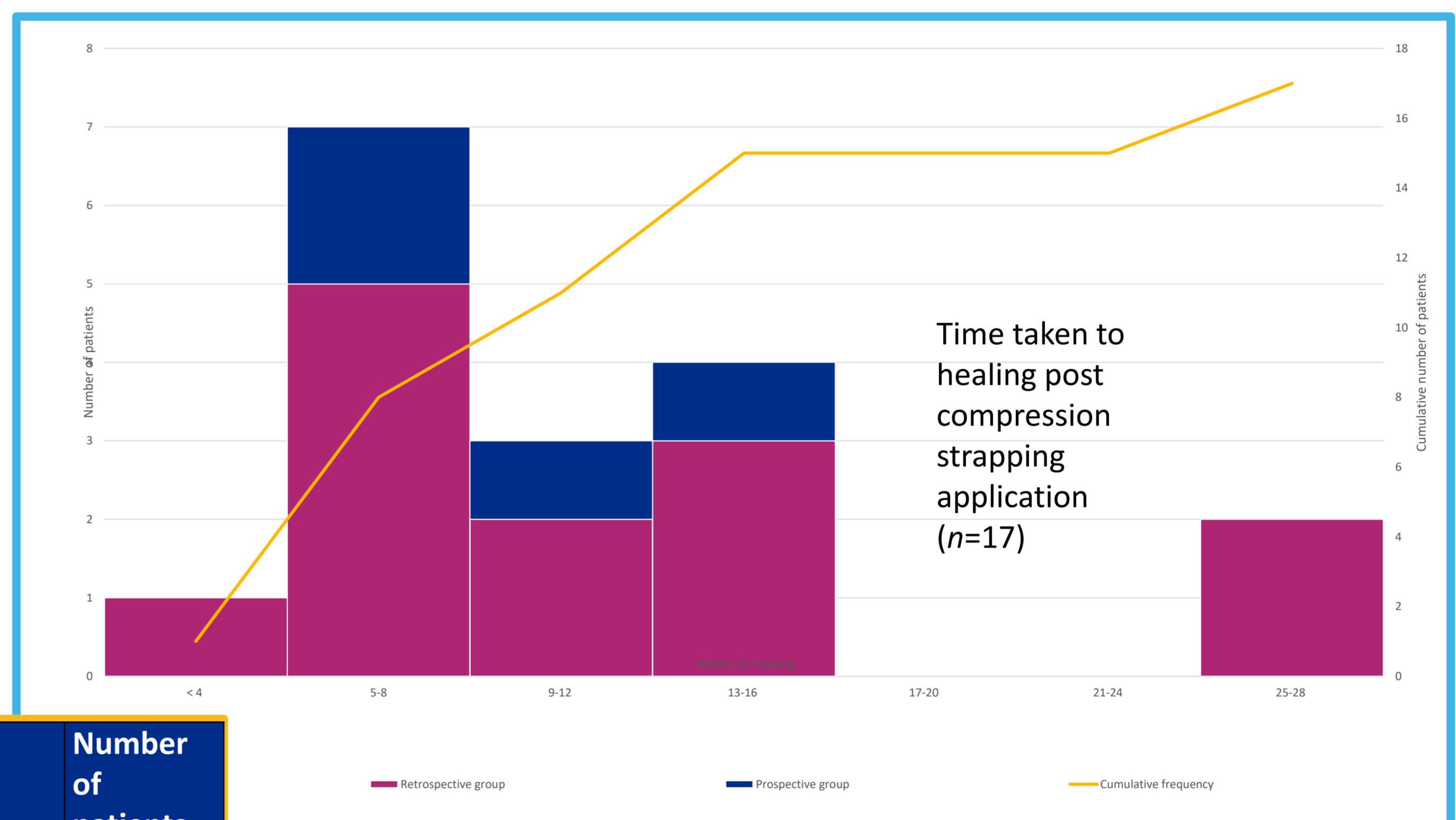
## Abstract

Leg ulcers (LU) are the most common type of wound in the UK but they are costly to the NHS and have significant impacts on the patients' wellbeing. Compression therapy is commonly used for the management of venous leg ulcers (VLU). However, some evidence shows that compression bandages do not apply therapeutic compression to the retromalleolar fossa (area around the ankle). Compression strapping can be used to increase the sub-bandage pressure, promote healing, reduce pain and increase quality of life in patients with retromalleolar leg ulcers.

A retrospective and prospective evaluation was undertaken of 24 patients with 41 ulcers who were treated with compression strapping by The Tissue Viability Team to assess the benefits of compression strapping.

## Findings

It was found that patients treated with CS often had multiple co-morbidities and shared common characteristics such as foot and ankle oedema, reduced mobility, previous ulceration, long duration of current ulceration and failure to heal despite the application of 'gold standard' compression therapy. Following the application of CS, 17 patients healed (n=27/41 ulcers), their mean pain scores decreased and their mean quality of life scores increased, although this was not statistically significant. CS was tolerated well with an overall positive patient experience reported. This study did, however, highlight a small group of patients that did not tolerate CS due to increased pain. A high LU recurrence rate was also identified in this group. The reasons for this were unclear and it would be useful to investigate this further.



Response	Number of patients
Good/very good	3
OK	1
Comfortable	1
It works so I'm happy	1
Compared to other bandages, I can feel the pressure on the wound	1
If it's too tight it's uncomfortable, but usually it's alright	1

Patient experience of compression strapping in the prospective group (n=5)

## Conclusion

There is a plan to extend the use of compression strapping to community nurses so that they can apply this to housebound patients following an assessment by the Tissue Viability Team developed through a 'Strapping Superhero' role in each community nursing locality. There is also a plan to improve the mobility of patients with leg ulcers, aiding venous return and promoting healing by increasing the multi-disciplinary approach to care. Plans to ensure fast access to appropriate therapeutic interventions and prompt escalation of treatment for patients requiring complex care to promote positive outcomes for patients with leg ulcers are also being developed. Additionally, there are plans to improve patient engagement, provide support, promote wellbeing, and promote self-care strategies to reduce recurrence by exploring the development of a support group. The evaluation of compression strapping is going to be continued.