

Lymphovenous News

ASK THE EXPERTS

Our panel of experts from the 2007 Lymphedema Matters conference answer outstanding questions for our readers. Additional questions will be answered in our next issue.



Conference speakers (from left) Saskia Thiadens; Executive Director of the National Lymphedema Network, Dr. Paula Stewart; Medical Director of the HealthSouth Lakeshore Rehabilitation Hospital in Birmingham, Alabama and Prof. Miles Johnston; Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology and Senior Scientist in the Neuroscience Research Program at Sunnybrook

Can a foot damaged by cellulitis and therefore lymph vessel damage, predispose one to cancer of the lymph system?

PAULA STEWART - The risk for lymphangiosarcoma is associated with untreated lymphedema, thus it is not so much the fact of the cellulitis as the presence of lymphedema and whether or not it is managed effectively that will impact the risk of cancer.

What about LE of the foot due to gestation (pregnancy). Is that primary or secondary LE?

PAULA STEWART - It could be primary that is expressed with the circumstances of pregnancy, however in the vast majority of cases it is a secondary lymphedema that occurs because of venous insufficiency and a failure of lymphatic transport capacity.

How does lower extremity lymphedema affect pregnancy in terms of treatment and/or complications?

PAULA STEWART - I am not aware of specific pregnancy complications due to lymphedema. Pregnancy can definitely worsen lymphedema and wearing appropriate compressive garments, taking time to elevate the legs and limiting salt intake are essential.

Thank you, Dr. Stewart for mentioning lymphorrhea. I have experienced this and would like some suggestions as to stopping the leakage besides lying down and waiting?

PAULA STEWART - Compression is the key treatment approach to lymphorrhea. Bandaging or compression stockings will do. If there is a copious amount of lymphorrhea then applying absorptive dressings under the bandages such as cut up diapers can be helpful.

Should a person with lymph nodes removed: Wear a sleeve during air travel? Take antibiotics when traveling to a developed country? Use lymph massage as a method of prevention?

SASKIA THIADENS -

a. The NLN Medical advisory Committee **does** recommend for people who have had lymph nodes removed in the armpit/groin and are at risk for lymphedema to wear a well fitted sleeve/stocking during air travel, especially during a long overseas flight. It is important to wear it prior to the flight for a couple of hours just to make sure it is not too tight or loose. Please refer to NLN Air Travel Position Paper on the website www.lymphnet.org

b. We do recommend patients with lymphedema to carry antibiotics while travelling, especially those who have had recurrent infections. It also helps to carry a letter from the physician, identifying the signs/symptoms of infection in case they end up in the Emergency due to high fever, or other problems.

c. We highly recommend for patients who have had node dissections to do Self Manual Drainage as a preventive method. Some physicians in the USA are now referring patients to a Lymphedema clinic to be educated in the anatomy/physiology of the lymphatic system and Self MLD. I foresee this to grow in the year ahead. At least this is my hope!

If a patient will only require a sleeve and not glove, do they still require bandaging of the RX phase at the fingers and hand also e.g. swelling is mainly around proximal perone not upper arm.

SASKIA THIADENS - During the treatment phase patients arm and fingers need to be bandaged. Once they have completed the treatment, and unless swelling in the hand/fingers they do not have to wear a glove/gauntlet.

What were the other alternative products shown in your presentation in addition to the Reid Sleeve i.e. to be worn over compression garments?

SASKIA THIADENS -

Alternative Garments:

In the US we have numerous companies who now have alternative garments.

Reid Sleeve www.lymphedema.com

Circaid Medical www.circaid.com

Jovi www.jovipak.com

Telesto MedTech www.telesto-medtech.com

Lymphovenous News

ASK THE EXPERTS—continued

If the left arm is affected with lymphedema, can it travel to the leg?

PAULA STEWART - It depends on the underlying cause of the lymphedema. If the lymphedema is due to surgical or traumatic injury to the lymphatics then the lymphedema is most likely to stay localized. If the lymphedema is primary in which there are inadequate pre-collectors or poorly functioning lymphatics, this phenomenon can affect more than one limb and the lymphedema seemingly "spread" as the transport capacity of the system is exceeded by situations such as weight gain, heat exposure, pregnancy, air travel, etc. The underlying lymphatic abnormality could then be expressed.

Is ImpediMed XCA available in Canada?

Editor's Note: *ImpediMed is both the pioneer and manufacturer of a Bioimpedance tool (offering early diagnostics) that was cleared by the FDA in the United States in April, 2007. LAO's Anna Kennedy spoke to Jack Butler, a Vice President with ImpediMed about their Canadian plans and was told the device is currently under review with Health Canada, awaiting approval before it can be commercially available here. ImpediMed's current tool is a unilateral arm device and plans are to have a similar leg device for sale by the end of 2008. Sales to date have been promising with 30—35 customers scattered among the hospitals, lymphedema clinics and Breast Cancer Surgeons within the United States.*

LYPHHEDEMA MATTERS SURVEY RESULTS

Thanks to the attendees of our Lymphedema Conference, who completed our Conference evaluation survey. We had over a 75% response rate. It is your feedback that enables us to raise the bar each year.

94% - rated the conference excellent or very good

96% - said they learned something new

97% - said the conference provided them with very useful information

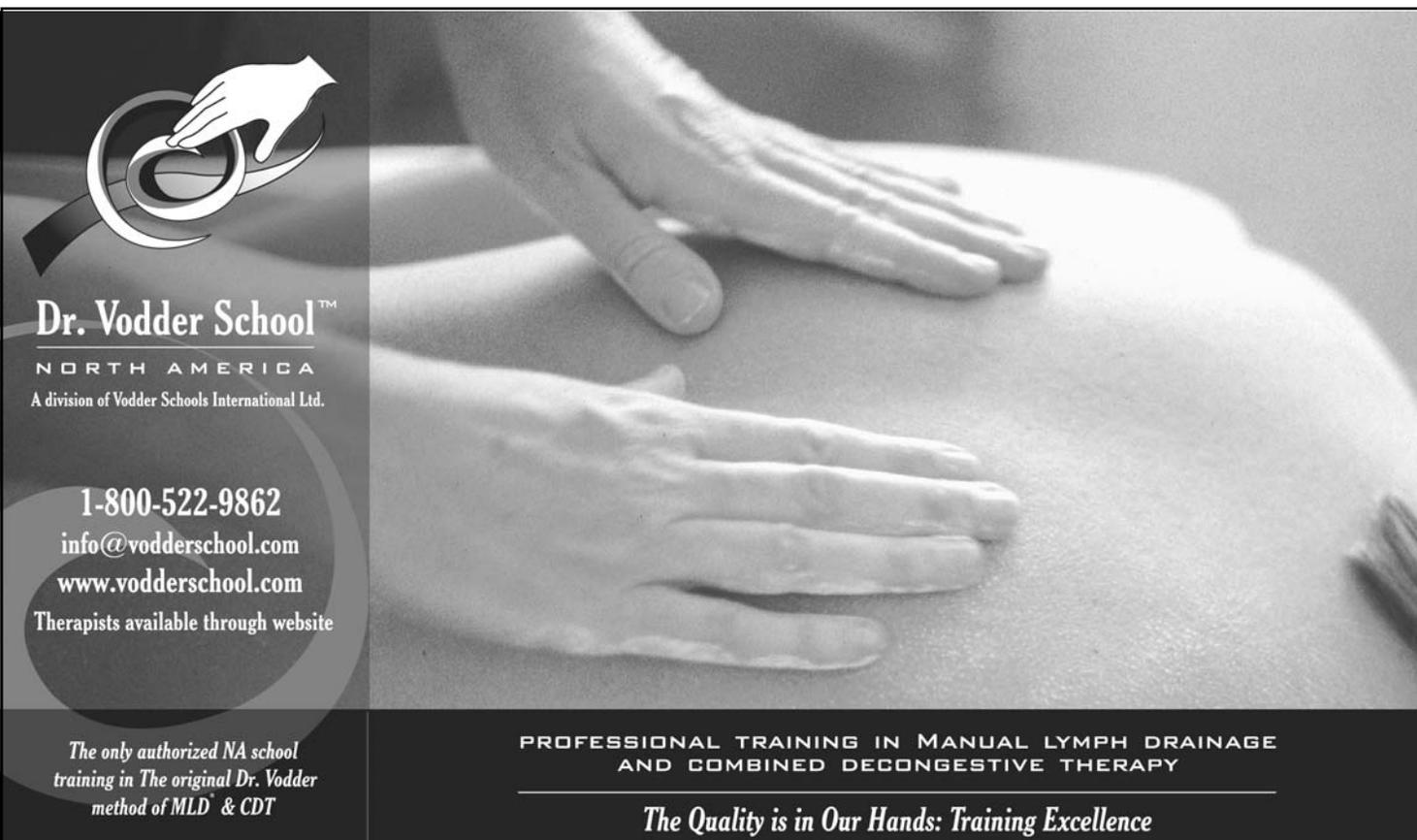
99% - stated the conference was a worthwhile investment of their time and money

Here are some of our favourite feedback comments:

"Your conference just keeps getting better and better!"

"I've got renewed enthusiasm for LE treatment and confirmation of being on the right track."

"Great speakers; WOW". "I networked with patients, professionals and speakers and also had fun."



**Dr. Vodder School™**
NORTH AMERICA
A division of Vodder Schools International Ltd.

1-800-522-9862
info@vodderschool.com
www.vodderschool.com
Therapists available through website

The only authorized NA school training in The original Dr. Vodder method of MLD & CDT

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN MANUAL LYMPH DRAINAGE AND COMBINED DECONGESTIVE THERAPY

The Quality is in Our Hands: Training Excellence