**SILVER ANTIMICROBIAL BARRIER SYSTEM AND HYDROCONDUCTIVE DRESSING COMBINATION: A UNIQUE AND EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR HEAVILY CONTAMINATED AND INFECTED WOUNDS**

JOHN M. HIEBERT, MD, FACS, FACN

**Introduction:** Heavily contaminated and infected open wounds often prevent wound bed preparation and prevent wound healing. Systemically administered antibiotics have been shown not to decrease tissue bacterial levels and many topical antimicrobials have cytotoxic side effects. Many silver containing dressings can control the bacterial bioburden, but do not remove the viable or nonviable bacteria from the wounds. Hydroconductive dressings can draw off excessive exudate, bacteria, and deleterious cytokines from the wound. We have studied the combination of a silver antimicrobial barrier system* and a hydroconductive dressing** in a variety of chronic wounds.

**Methods:** 36 patients with diabetic, arterial, venous, and traumatic chronic wounds were treated with a combination of silver antimicrobial and hydroconductive dressings following debridement of devitalized tissue. The silver dressings were left in place for 7-12 days. The hydroconductive dressing was changed every 1-4 days depending on the exudate volume. Exudate volume was predicted by wound type; i.e. arterial wounds – low exudate, traumatic wounds – intermediate exudate, and venous insufficiency and diabetic wounds-high exudate.

**Results:** This unique combination of dressings has solved the problem of the heavily contaminated and/or infected wound in a variety of chronic conditions. It controls the bacterial bioburden in the wound and facilitates wound bed preparation. Several smaller wounds have progressed to complete healing without need for invasive procedures or surgery. Four representative examples are presented to demonstrate the effectiveness of this unique combination of wound dressings.

**Conclusions:** The unique combination of a specific silver dressing and a specific hydroconductive dressing proved to be very effective treatment for heavily contaminated and/or infected wounds.

*Therabond (Choice Therapeutics, Wrentham, MA)
**Drawtex (SteadMed Medical LLC, Fort Worth, TX)