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An Innovative Wound Healing Community Outreach Service

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Aims

- Provide advanced wound healing services in a social environment
- Enable greater numbers of people to be treated by providing efficient services in an accessible setting with a focus on preventive care
- Enable research evidence to be translated into practice
- Overcome fragmentation in wound care services by close interaction with other health care providers
- Provide education on wound care for health care professionals and students
- Conduct research and evaluation projects

Key Issues

- Chronic wounds are a significant source of pain, immobility and social isolation in older people^{1,2}.
- Chronic leg ulcers occur in approximately 1–3% of those aged over 60 years, and the incidence increases further with age³⁻⁵.
- Chronic wounds are associated with significant long-term health care costs. The estimated cost to the Australian health care system in 1996 was around \$A500 million/year⁷.
- Wound care services are currently provided by a fragmented mix of care providers resulting in poor continuity of care across the health service continuum and a lack of consistent long-term preventative care⁸⁻¹⁰.



How is the Wound Healing Community Outreach Service Different to Other Services?

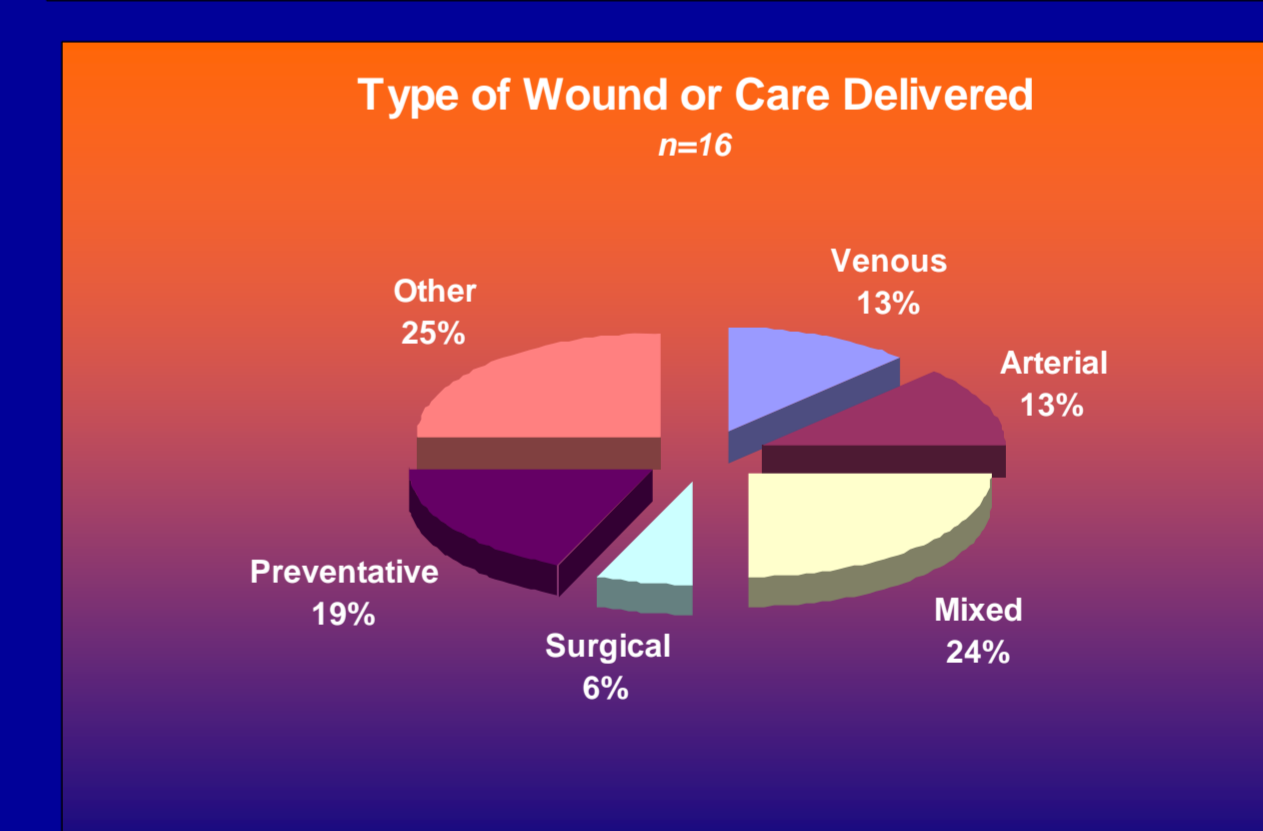
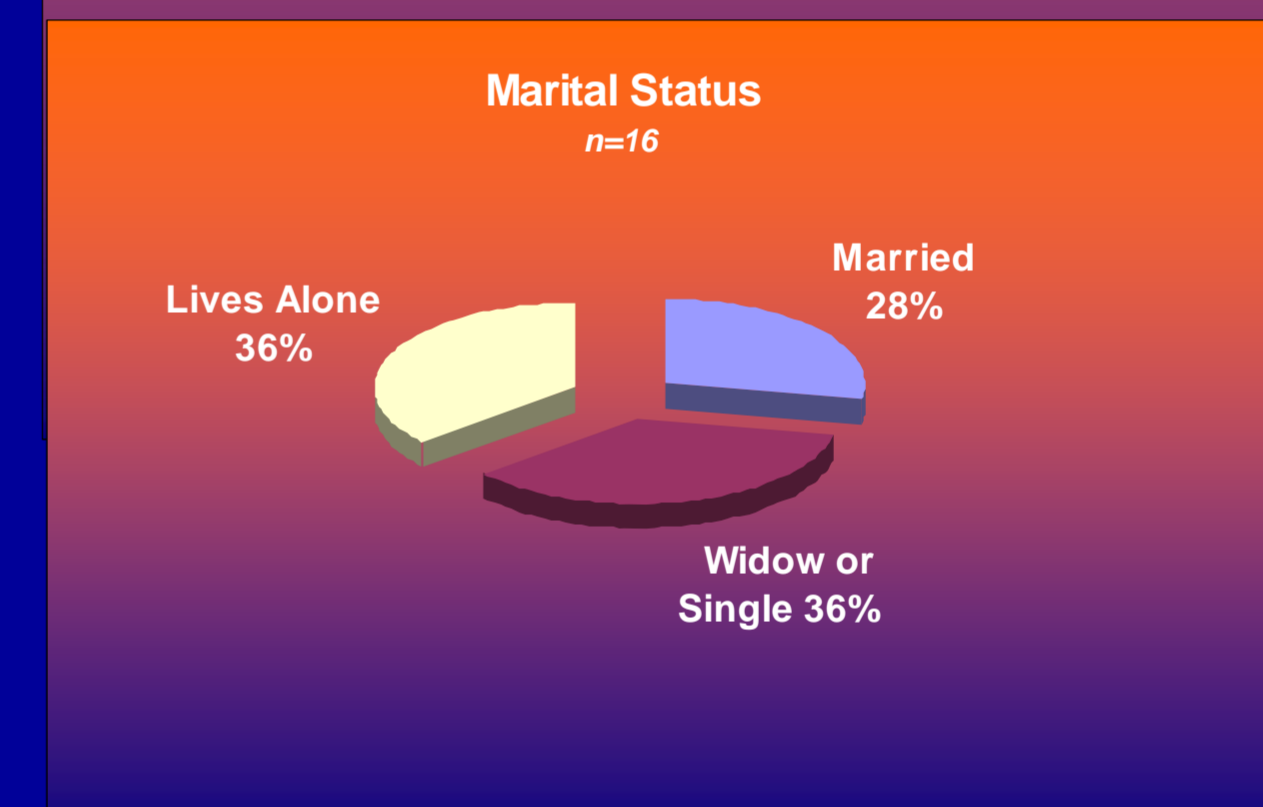
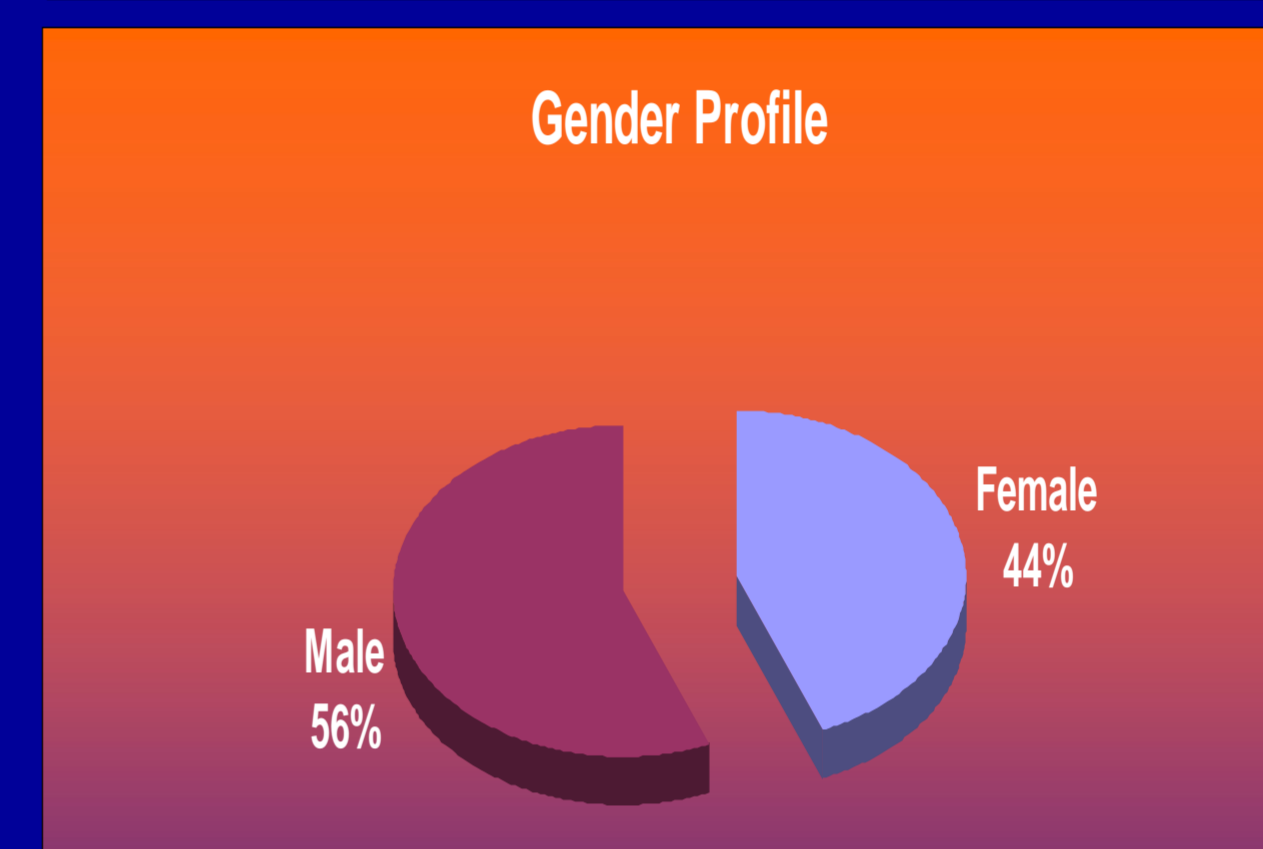
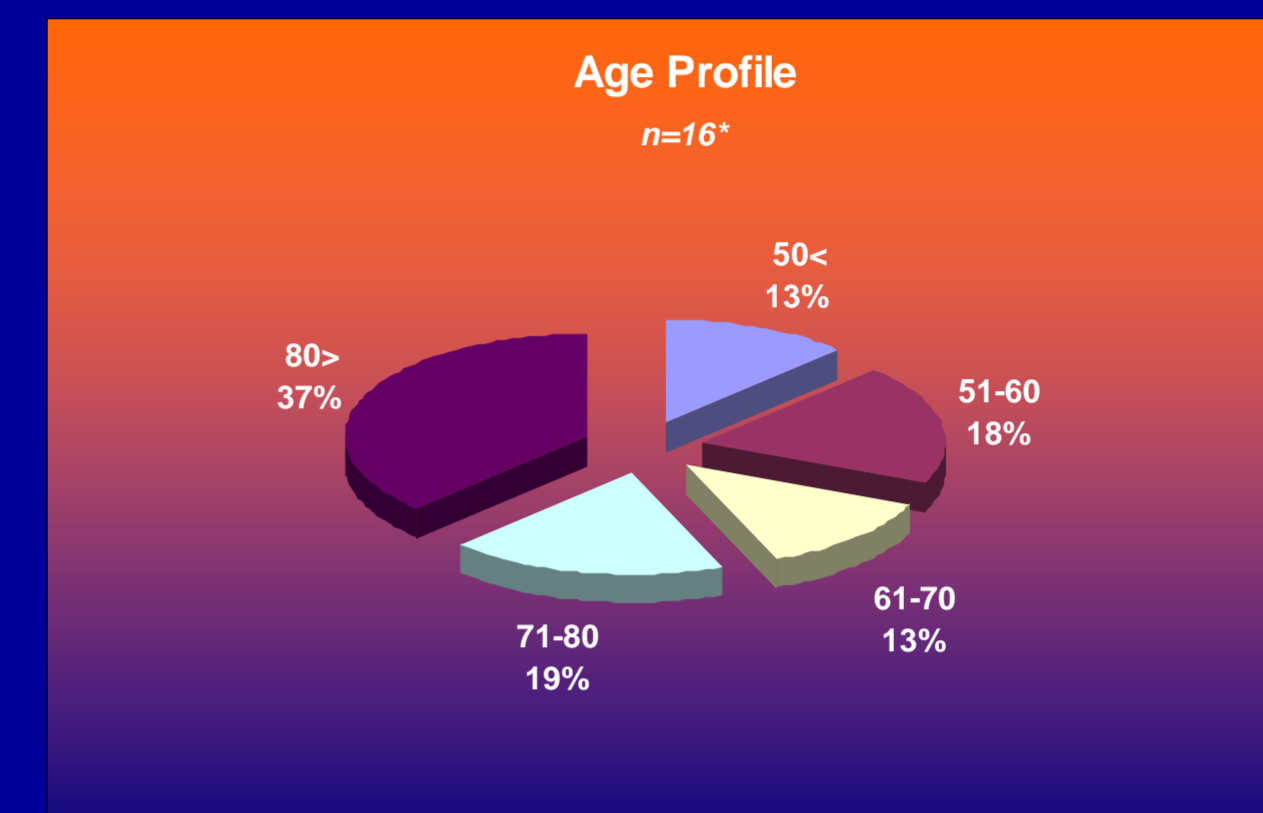
- Complements existing health care services by providing a centralised and community-based service for patients that connects different health care providers through collaboration and sharing of evidence-based research outcomes.
- Patients do not require a referral to attend and patients are never discharged – they are always welcome to attend for regular health checks and to participate in social support.
 - The Service is operated by a Nurse Practitioner, Community Development Worker and a team of researchers.
 - Previous research at IHBI has found that peer support, education and long term continuity of care in a social environment can improve cost-effectiveness and health outcomes for patients with chronic wounds¹¹.

Target Population

- People living in the community with chronic wounds either self referred or referred by surrounding health service providers.
- The Service operates on a social model of health to encourage people from all walks of life to attend, participate and interact with other members of the community.

Outcomes

- Improved wound healing and quality of life for people with chronic wounds by provision of a wound care service within a social environment providing evidence based wound care
- Provision of accessible wound healing services to a sector of the population who do not access traditional health care services for their chronic wounds
- Decreased fragmentation in wound care services
- Facilitation of wound healing in rural and remote areas by provision of education on wound care for health care providers
- Decreased costs to health service providers and patients, through improved healing rates and preventative strategies
- New and innovative solutions to improve health issues and to apply these findings to enhance the lives of individuals and communities



Providing assessment, treatment and prevention for people with wounds

* data collected from 29 January—22 April 2008 on first 16 patients to attend Wound Healing Service

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