

An Exploration of Burn Survivors' Experiences of Pressure Garment Therapy at a Tertiary Hospital in South Africa: The Impact of This on Service Delivery

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Introduction: Pressure garment therapy (PGT) forms a significant part of burn rehabilitation. It is most commonly used to treat hypertrophic scars but the benefits of this intervention remain questionable. Adherence with this intervention also presents several challenges for the patient and clinician. The aim of the paper was to explore the PGT experiences of adult burn survivors with the intention of reviewing the service. Since then, the Western Cape Province lost its tender supplier of pressure garment material with major consequences to the service.

Method: The experiences of eight purposively sampled participants were explored in a qualitative, phenomenological study. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was conducted using pre-determined themes from the literature as a starting point.

Results: Participants described an improvement in the scars, but struggled with adherence to PGT. The emotional impact of the burn injury, physical symptoms, the effort of caring for the garments and aesthetic factors created barriers to adherence. Support, inner strength, knowledge, and seeing an improvement facilitated adherence.

Conclusion: The findings of the study show that participants perceived PGT as beneficial, but several complex factors impacted adherence. The most significant benefit as described by the participants was the improvements noted in scar appearance, whilst the main barrier was that the garments were cosmetically displeasing due to their colour. Therapists involved in the provincial tender process have used this insight to enhance the PGT service but this has also been met with several challenges.