International Journal of Medical and Health Research
www.medicalsciencejournal.com
ISSN: 2454-9142
Received: 04-04-2025, Accepted: 05-05-2025, Published: 20-05-2025
Volume 11, Issue 3, 2025, Page No. 35-40

Effectiveness of wound management dashboard on wound healing outcomes in patients at selected hospitals of Wayanad district, Kerala

Neethu Francis, Dr. Maneesh Kumar Sharma
Department of Nursing, Shri Venkateshwara University, Gajraula, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract
This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a wound management dashboard in enhancing wound healing outcomes among patients with surgical wounds, diabetic foot ulcers, and pressure ulcers. Employing a pre-experimental, one-group pre-test post-test design, a sample of 30 patients was assessed using standardized wound assessment tools before and after the implementation of care guided by the dashboard. The results demonstrated a significant improvement in wound healing scores following the intervention ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the dashboard is a valuable tool for improving wound care efficacy in clinical practice. These findings highlight the potential of digital tools to streamline wound management processes and enhance patient outcomes. Future research should focus on involving larger, more diverse patient populations across multiple healthcare settings to validate these preliminary results and determine the long-term benefits, scalability and integration of wound management dashboards into routine clinical workflows.

Keywords: Wound management dashboard, wound healing, clinical outcomes, digital health tools, wound assessment, surgical wounds, diabetic foot ulcers, pressure ulcers, healthcare technology, patient care, wound care improvement, clinical research

Introduction

Wound management remains a fundamental component of healthcare, significantly influencing patient recovery trajectories, quality of life and overall healthcare costs. The effective treatment of wounds, whether acute or chronic, necessitates meticulous assessment, timely intervention, and continuous monitoring. Despite advancements in medical science, wound care practices often rely heavily on manual documentation and subjective clinical judgment, which can lead to inconsistencies, delays in treatment, and suboptimal healing outcomes. These challenges are particularly pronounced in resource-limited settings, where healthcare providers may face difficulties in maintaining standardized documentation, tracking healing progress, and making informed clinical decisions promptly. Traditional wound management practices typically involve manual charting of wound size, appearance, exudate, and surrounding tissue condition, often recorded on paper or basic electronic health records. Such methods are prone to inaccuracies, incomplete data entries, and delays in communication among multidisciplinary teams involved in wound care. Moreover, the subjective nature of wound assessment can lead to inter-observer variability, further compromising the consistency and quality of care provided (Smith *et al*, 2018) [19]. As a result, patients may experience prolonged healing times, increased risk of infection, and higher likelihood of complications, ultimately impacting their quality of life and increasing the burden on healthcare systems. In recent years, technological innovations have emerged as promising solutions to address these challenges in wound management. One such innovation is the development of wound management dashboards integrated digital platforms designed to facilitate real-time data collection, visualization and analysis of wound healing parameters. These dashboards enable clinicians to monitor wound progress systematically, set treatment goals, and modify interventions based on objective data. By providing a centralized, accessible interface, they promote coordinated care among multidisciplinary teams and support evidence-based decision-making (Johnson & Lee, 2020) [10]. Additionally, the use of digital dashboards can reduce documentation errors, improve communication, and enhance patient engagement by providing visual feedback on healing progress. The integration of technology into wound care is particularly relevant in settings such as Wayanad District, Kerala, where healthcare facilities serve diverse populations with varying levels of access to specialized wound care services. Wayanad, characterized by its hilly terrain and dispersed settlements, faces unique challenges in delivering consistent and effective wound management. Limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of trained wound care specialists can hinder timely interventions and optimal healing outcomes. Implementing a wound management dashboard in selected hospitals of this district offers an innovative approach to overcoming these barriers by streamlining clinical workflows and promoting standardized care practices.

Several studies have highlighted the potential benefits of digital health interventions in improving wound management. Kumar *et al.* (2019) [12, 13] demonstrated that electronic wound documentation systems significantly enhanced the accuracy and completeness of wound records, leading to better treatment planning and reduced healing times. Similarly, research by Patel and colleagues (2021) [17] indicated that digital monitoring tools improved patient adherence to wound care regimens and facilitated early detection of complications. Despite these promising findings, there remains a paucity of context-specific research evaluating the effectiveness of wound management dashboards in rural and semi-urban healthcare settings in India, including Kerala. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing a wound

management dashboard in improving wound healing outcomes among patients treated at selected hospitals in Wayanad District. Specifically, the study aims to assess whether the use of the dashboard leads to reductions in wound healing time, decreases in complication rates, and improvements in patient satisfaction. Additionally, the study explores healthcare providers' perceptions of the usability and utility of the dashboard, along with its impact on clinical decision-making and workflow efficiency. The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform healthcare policy and clinical practice by providing evidence on the benefits and challenges associated with digital wound management tools in a resource-constrained setting. As India continues to expand its digital health initiatives, understanding the real-world impact of such interventions is critical to scaling up successful models and ensuring equitable access to quality wound care. Moreover, the findings could contribute to the development of standardized protocols for digital wound management, fostering a culture of data-driven and patient-centered care. Wounds pose a significant healthcare challenge worldwide, with traditional management approaches often falling short in delivering timely and effective treatment. The integration of technological solutions, such as wound management dashboards, offers a promising avenue to enhance clinical outcomes, optimize resource utilization, and improve patient satisfaction. This study aims to evaluate the impact of such a dashboard in the context of Wayanad District, Kerala, thereby contributing valuable insights into the feasibility and effectiveness of digital interventions in rural Indian healthcare settings. The subsequent sections will detail the research methodology, including study design, sample selection, data collection procedures, and analytical approaches, to rigorously assess the role of digital wound management tools in improving patient outcomes.

Methodology

Research methodology constitutes the backbone of any scientific study, providing a systematic approach to investigating the research problem. It encompasses the research design, sample selection, tools and instruments used for data collection, procedures followed during the study, and the statistical methods employed for data analysis. This section elaborates on the methodological framework adopted for evaluating the effectiveness of the wound management dashboard in improving wound healing outcomes among patients with various types of wounds in Wayanad District, Kerala.

Research Design

This study employed a pre-experimental, one-group pre-test post-test design. Such a design is appropriate when the primary aim is to assess the effect of an intervention—in this case, the wound management dashboard—on specific outcomes within a single group over a defined period (Creswell, 2014) [5]. The pre-test involved assessing the baseline wound status and associated parameters before the intervention, while the post-test was conducted after implementing the intervention over a specified duration. This design allows for direct comparison of participants' wound healing progress before and after the introduction of the dashboard, thereby providing preliminary evidence of its effectiveness. Although this design lacks a control group, it is advantageous in clinical settings where randomization may be impractical or unethical, especially for initial exploratory studies (Polit & Beck, 2017) [18].

Sample Selection

The study sample comprised 30 patients diagnosed with various types of wounds, including surgical wounds, diabetic foot ulcers, and pressure ulcers. The selection criteria were as follows: patients aged 18 years and above, with wounds of at least 14 days duration, who were admitted or receiving outpatient care at the selected hospitals in Wayanad District. Patients with severe comorbidities that could significantly influence wound healing, such as advanced malignancies or immunosuppressive conditions, were excluded to maintain homogeneity and ensure that observed effects could be attributed primarily to the intervention. Using convenience sampling, participants were recruited from the inpatient and outpatient departments of the participating hospitals. The sample size of 30 was determined based on previous similar studies (Kumar *et al*, 2019) [13, 14] and was considered sufficient to detect statistically significant differences with an acceptable power, given the resource constraints and logistical considerations typical of such settings.

Tools and Instruments

To systematically assess wound healing and related parameters, validated standardized tools were employed:

Demographic Questionnaire: Developed to collect essential demographic data, including age, gender, type of wound, duration of wound, comorbidities, and other relevant clinical information. This provided context for analyzing potential demographic influences on wound healing outcomes (Kumar *et al*, 2019) [14,15].

Bates-Jensen Wound Assessment Tool (BWAT): A comprehensive and validated instrument used globally to assess wound status across multiple domains, such as size, depth, tissue type, exudate, and periwound condition (Bates-Jensen *et al*, 2000) [3]. It provides a quantitative score reflecting wound severity and progress, facilitating objective comparisons pre- and post-intervention.

Braden Scale: An established tool for predicting pressure ulcer risk, assessing sensory perception, moisture, activity, mobility, nutrition, and friction/shear (Bergström *et al*, 1987) [4]. In this study, it was used to characterize pressure ulcer patients and examine correlations between risk level and healing outcomes.

Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) and FLACC Scale: To assess pain levels associated with wounds, the VAS was used for conscious patients to rate pain on a 10-cm line, while the FLACC scale, which evaluates Face, Legs, Activity, Cry, and Consolability was used for pediatric or non-verbal patients (Merkel *et al*, 2009) [15]. Pain assessment is vital, as pain can influence wound healing and patient compliance.

Procedure

The study was conducted over a period of approximately three weeks, with the following steps:

Initial Wound Assessment (Day 1): Participants underwent comprehensive wound evaluation using the Bates-Jensen wound assessment tool and the Braden scale.

Pain levels were recorded using VAS or FLACC scales, depending on patient capacity. Demographic data were collected through interviews and medical records review. This initial assessment established baseline wound status and patient characteristics.

Implementation of the Wound Management Dashboard: Following the baseline assessment, the healthcare providers utilized the wound management dashboard to guide wound care. The dashboard was designed to integrate real-time wound data, facilitate standardized documentation, and support clinical decision-making through visual analytics. Wound care interventions, such as dressing changes, debridement, and infection control measures, were conducted based on the real-time data and alerts generated by the dashboard, ensuring timely and evidence-based interventions.

Follow-Up Period (14 Days): Participants received wound care as per the standardized protocol facilitated by the dashboard. During this period, clinicians documented wound progress regularly, updating the dashboard with new assessments. The dashboard enabled continuous monitoring and alerted clinicians to any deviations or deterioration.

Reassessment (Day 14): After 14 days of intervention, a follow-up wound assessment was performed using the same tools—Bates-Jensen, Braden scale, VAS/FLACC—to evaluate changes in wound condition, risk factors, and pain levels. The primary outcome was the change in wound status, measured through the BWAT score, while secondary outcomes included pain reduction and risk score changes.

This structured approach allowed for a systematic evaluation of the impact of the digital wound management tool over the specified period, capturing data at baseline and follow-up for comparative analysis.

Data Analysis

Data collected were subjected to rigorous statistical analysis to determine the significance of observed changes:

Paired T-Test: The primary analytical method involved comparing pre- and post-intervention scores of the Bates-Jensen wound assessment tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the dashboard-driven wound care. The paired t-test is suitable for assessing mean differences within the same group over time and is widely used in clinical intervention studies (Field, 2013) [7]. A significant reduction in BWAT scores post-intervention would suggest improved wound healing attributable to the dashboard-guided care.

Chi-square Test: To explore associations between demographic variables (such as age, gender, wound type, and comorbidities) and healing outcomes, the chi-square test of independence was employed. This non-parametric test assesses whether categorical variables are related, providing insights into factors that might influence treatment success (Agresti, 2018) [1].

Additional Analyses: Descriptive statistics summarized demographic data and baseline characteristics. Changes in pain levels and risk scores were also analyzed using appropriate parametric or non-parametric tests based on data distribution.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee of the participating hospitals. Informed consent was secured from all participants, ensuring they understood the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Confidentiality of patient data was maintained throughout the study, with anonymized data used for analysis. The intervention involved standard wound care practices augmented by the dashboard, which posed minimal risk to participants.

Limitations of the Methodology

While the chosen design and methods provide valuable preliminary insights, certain limitations are inherent. The absence of a control group restricts the ability to attribute improvements solely to the dashboard intervention, as other confounding factors may influence healing (Creswell, 2014) [6]. The small sample size limits generalizability, and the short follow-up period may not capture long-term outcomes such as wound recurrence. Future studies employing randomized controlled designs with larger samples and extended follow-up are recommended to validate these findings.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study, highlighting the impact of the wound management dashboard on wound healing outcomes among the 30 participants. The analysis focused on comparing pre- and post-intervention wound assessment scores, pain levels, and risk factors. Additionally, demographic variables were examined to identify any associations with healing outcomes. The results demonstrate that the implementation of the dashboard significantly improved wound healing, with no significant association between demographic factors and healing efficacy, suggesting its applicability across diverse patient groups.

Wound Healing Outcomes: Pre- and Post-Intervention Comparison

The primary outcome was the change in wound status as measured by the Bates-Jensen Wound Assessment Tool (BWAT). The data revealed a significant improvement in wound conditions after 14 days of dashboard-supported care.

Table 1: Mean BWAT Scores Before and After Intervention

Parameters	Pre-Intervention Mean ± SD	Post-Intervention Mean ± SD	Mean Difference	p-value
BWAT Score	24.8 ± 4.2	15.3 ± 3.8	9.5	< 0.001

Note: A lower BWAT score indicates better wound healing status.

This table illustrates the comparison of wound healing scores, measured by the BWAT, before and after the intervention. The average pre-intervention score was 24.8 with a standard deviation of 4.2, indicating the initial severity of the wounds. Following the implementation of the intervention, the mean score significantly improved to 15.3

with a standard deviation of 3.8, reflecting better wound conditions. The mean difference of 9.5 points demonstrates a substantial improvement in wound healing. The p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that this change is statistically significant, suggesting that the intervention—likely supported by the dashboard—had a meaningful positive effect on wound outcomes.

Pain Level Reduction

Pain assessment was conducted using the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS). The findings showed a significant decrease in pain levels post-intervention.

Table 2: Pain Scores Before and After Intervention

Parameter	Pre-Intervention Mean ± SD	Post-Intervention Mean ± SD	Mean Difference	p-value
Pain (VAS) Score	6.2 ± 1.8	3.1 ± 1.4	3.1	< 0.001

This table compares the pain levels of participants before and after the intervention, measured using the Visual Analog Scale (VAS). The average pre-intervention pain score was 6.2 with a standard deviation of 1.8, indicating moderate to high pain levels. After the intervention, the mean pain score decreased significantly to 3.1 with a standard deviation of 1.4, reflecting a notable reduction in pain intensity. The mean difference of 3.1 points demonstrates a substantial improvement in pain relief following the intervention. The p-value of less than 0.001 confirms that this reduction is statistically significant, meaning it is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. Overall, the intervention was effective in significantly reducing pain levels among the participants.

Wound Healing Progress Across Different Wound Types

Participants had different wound types: surgical wounds, diabetic foot ulcers, and pressure ulcers. The analysis examined whether these types affected healing outcomes.

Table 3: Mean Change in BWAT Scores by Wound Type

Wound Type	Pre-Intervention Mean ± SD	Post-Intervention Mean ± SD	Mean Change	p-value
Surgical Wounds	22.5 ± 3.9	13.2 ± 3.5	9.3	< 0.001
Diabetic Foot Ulcers	26.1 ± 4.5	17.0 ± 4.2	9.1	< 0.001
Pressure Ulcers	24.3 ± 4.0	15.2 ± 3.7	9.1	< 0.001

This table presents the changes in wound healing scores, measured by the BWAT, across different wound types before and after the intervention. For surgical wounds, the mean score decreased significantly from 22.5 (± 3.9) pre-intervention to 13.2 (± 3.5) post-intervention, with a mean change of 9.3 points and a p-value of less than 0.001. Similarly, diabetic foot ulcers showed a substantial improvement, with scores dropping from 26.1 (± 4.5) to 17.0 (± 4.2), a mean change of 9.1 points, also statistically significant. Pressure ulcers exhibited a comparable reduction, decreasing from 24.3 (± 4.0) to 15.2 (± 3.7), with a mean change of 9.1 points and a p-value less than 0.001. These results indicate that the intervention was highly effective across all wound types, leading to significant improvements in wound healing scores.

Demographic Variables and Healing Outcomes

To explore whether demographic factors influenced healing, chi-square tests were conducted for age, gender, and presence of comorbidities.

Table 4: Association Between Demographic Variables and Wound Healing

Demographic Variable	Categories	Significant Association	p-value
Age	< 50, 50–65, > 65	No	0.45
Gender	Male, Female	No	0.67
Comorbidities	Present, Absent	No	0.52

This table summarizes the analysis of the relationship between various demographic variables and the outcome of interest, indicating whether there is a significant association. For age, categorized into groups under 50, between 50 and 65, and over 65, there was no significant association observed, with a p-value of 0.45. Similarly, gender—comparing males and females—also showed no significant relationship, with a p-value of 0.67. Additionally, the presence or absence of comorbidities did not significantly influence the outcome, as indicated by a p-value of 0.52. Overall, these findings suggest that age, gender, and comorbidities did not have a statistically significant impact on the measured variable in this study.

Understanding the influence of demographic variables such as age, gender, and comorbidities on wound healing has been a focal point of numerous studies, aiming to optimize patient outcomes through tailored interventions. The current study found no significant association between age groups (<50, 50–65, >65) and wound healing outcomes, with a p-value of 0.45. This contrasts with a substantial body of existing literature suggesting that aging generally impairs wound healing. Guo and DiPietro (2010) [9] emphasized that older individuals often experience delayed healing due to decreased cellular proliferation, diminished angiogenesis, and compromised immune responses. Similarly, Driver *et al*. (2010) [6] reported that patients over 65 with diabetic foot ulcers tend to have slower healing times and higher complication rates. These findings highlight the biological impact of aging on tissue repair processes. However, more recent investigations, such as those by Weller *et al*. (2018) [20], have shown that with the application of advanced wound care strategies and standardized treatment protocols, the disparities traditionally attributed to age can be minimized. Their randomized controlled trial demonstrated comparable healing rates across age groups when optimal care is provided, indicating that age may not be an insurmountable

barrier in wound management. Regarding gender, the current study observed no significant difference in healing outcomes between males and females (p=0.67). This aligns with some prior research suggesting that gender differences, influenced by hormonal variations, may not be as impactful as previously thought when other factors are controlled. For instance, Kondo *et al*. (2013) [11] found that women experienced somewhat faster healing in pressure ulcers, potentially due to estrogen's promotion of collagen synthesis and angiogenesis. Conversely, Lunde *et al*. (2010) [14] reported no significant gender disparities across various wound types, especially in studies where confounding factors such as age and comorbidities were controlled. These findings imply that biological differences between genders might be less influential in wound healing than the quality of wound care and patient compliance. The current results support this perspective, suggesting that gender alone should not be a determinant in clinical decision-making for wound management, especially when standardized care protocols are employed. The absence of a significant association between comorbidities and healing outcomes (p=0.52) in this study is particularly interesting, given the extensive literature indicating that systemic conditions like diabetes, peripheral vascular disease, and malnutrition adversely affect tissue repair. Guo and DiPietro (2010) [10] highlighted that diabetic patients often face delayed healing due to impaired leukocyte function, microvascular complications, and neuropathy, which are well-documented risk factors. Frykberg and Banks (2015) [8] further emphasized that comorbidities complicate wound management and increase the risk of chronicity and infection. Nonetheless, some recent studies suggest that the negative impact of comorbidities can be attenuated through comprehensive management strategies. Baranoski and Ayello (2014) [2] demonstrated that multidisciplinary approaches, including tight glycemic control, nutritional support, and advanced dressings, can significantly improve healing outcomes even in high-risk populations. Therefore, the lack of a significant association in the current study might reflect effective management protocols, patient selection, or sample characteristics that mitigate the typical adverse effects of comorbidities.

Overall, these findings indicate that while traditional views emphasize the detrimental effects of age, gender, and comorbidities on wound healing, their impact can be influenced and often mitigated by appropriate interventions and care strategies. The discrepancies between this study's results and earlier literature could be attributed to differences in study design, sample size, population characteristics, and the quality of wound management. It also underscores the importance of individualized care and the potential for standardizing treatment protocols to neutralize demographic disparities. As the field advances, more research is needed to delineate the precise roles of these variables, but current evidence suggests that optimal wound care can significantly diminish their influence, leading to improved healing outcomes across diverse patient populations.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Implementing wound management dashboards has demonstrated a promising potential to significantly enhance clinical outcomes by providing clinicians with real-time data, standardized assessment tools, and streamlined documentation processes. These dashboards facilitate timely decision-making, improve adherence to treatment protocols, and enable continuous monitoring of wound healing progress, ultimately leading to reduced healing times, fewer complications, and improved patient satisfaction. The integration of such technological tools into clinical practice represents a step forward in advancing wound care quality and efficiency. However, despite encouraging preliminary results, there is a need for further research to validate these benefits across diverse patient populations and healthcare settings. Future studies should focus on conducting larger, multicenter randomized controlled trials (RCTs) that include a broader demographic to ensure the findings are generalizable. These trials should also evaluate the long-term impacts of dashboard implementation on clinical outcomes, healthcare costs, and patient quality of life. Additionally, exploring the integration of advanced features such as predictive analytics, artificial intelligence, and patient engagement modules could further optimize wound management strategies. Establishing standardized protocols for dashboard deployment and assessing user experience among healthcare providers will also be essential to facilitate widespread adoption. Ultimately, a comprehensive evidence base derived from rigorous research will support the broader implementation of wound management dashboards as a cornerstone of modern wound care, contributing to improved outcomes and more efficient healthcare delivery.

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