Honey used in Wound Care: Modern use of an 'ancient' remedy

Case report

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Introduction

Honey is a supersaturated and sticky sugar solution, which derives from the nectar collected by Apis Mellifera (European Honey Bee). Honey has been used since ancient times as a remedy for healing skin wounds of any etiology. In the Smith Papyrus there are approximately 500 remedies based on this substance. In 1966 it started to be used clinically in Great Britain and in 1970, it was inserted into the British National Formulary. In 1976 the first scientific works by L. Herszage e R. Knutson were published. Evidence from studies and trials suggests that honey can accelerate the healing process of wounds.

Objectives

To evaluate the clinical effectiveness of honey-based medications in treating skin wounds of diverse etiology.

Discussion

Some patients, presenting wounds of different etiology (venous, post-surgery, post-traumatic), on different areas of the body and at different clinical stages, have been examined. A primary medication based on honey-soaked° gauze has been used in each case, and it has been associated to a honey-based^ gel in the case of cavity wounds. Secondary medication was carried out with a cotton gauze, as well as by applying a cohesive, double layered bandage of average tension to leg wounds. The local treatment was performed every 48 hours.

Conclusions

Thanks to its stickiness, honey acts as a barrier against exogenous infections and, because of its osmolarity, it allows for a proper fluid management with respects to WBP, fostering both fibroblast and keratinocyte activity. Another important aspect is its non-adherence to the wound itself with a consequent lack of pain during the medication procedure. It has shown to be an excellent autolytic/osmotic debrider, which can quickly remove necrotic tissue. Honey can therefore be considered as a valid alternative, as well as an aid, to currently used medications.

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