

Patience and Compassion in Wound Care

Katherine Blessing

To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.
— Bessie Stanley, “Success” (adaptation)



Wound care is a challenging and dynamic field that demands providers think on their feet. Arturo González, DNP, ARNP, ANP-BC, CWCN-AP knows there are times when you think you have solved a problem, only to have something new emerge and change the plan of care. “My role has taught me patience and compassion are fundamental to ensuring the patient can heal,” he says.

In 1997, Arturo graduated with an Associate’s Degree in Nursing (Miami-Dade Community College, Miami, FL) and worked in the field for several years. Finding the role of a registered nurse restricting, Arturo completed his Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing in 2007 and his Masters degree in 2009, both at the Florida International University (Miami, FL). He then started working as a wound care specialist for Wound Technology Network (Hollywood, FL). His 7 years as an Adult Nurse Practitioner with this organization sparked and solidified his interest in wound care. “This specialization is often overlooked, but it is vital to the patient’s health and well-being,” he says.

With his strong clinical background and knowledge of evidence-based practice, Arturo then decided to pursue a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, which he earned from Chatham University (Pittsburgh, PA) in 2013.

Since graduating, he has been building his clinical experience and teaching full-time at the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Florida International University, as a Clinical Assistant Professor through a Veteran Affairs Nursing Academic Partnership (VANAP). “This role has provided an important perspective regarding wound care as an integral component of nursing care in a health system,” he says. “I work with the veteran population as part of a grant where the Miami VA and the university collaboratively teach a veteran-centered curriculum to undergraduate nurses. Part of our grant also includes a post baccalaureate nursing resident program that allows us to select 20 new nurses every year and provide them an additional 1-year experience within the VA system. I am focused on building educational programs for RNs to provide basic wound care and assessment. Recognizing the bigger picture

when it comes to both health and nursing care has been the impetus for serving in this role. Five years ago, I would not have envisioned my doing this, but it is truly rewarding.”

“What I have always liked best about nursing care, in general, is direct contact with the patient,” Arturo says. “Through my current role as a wound care specialist, I can keep in contact with patients, providing the best evidence-based care available. I also can educate nursing students through my role in academia. Knowing I have made some difference in all these lives provides a great deal of fulfillment.”

Arturo says the most challenging aspects of working in the nursing profession involve institutional and regulatory frameworks. He says many instances in which nurses can do things better are limited by policy and protocol. “I recognize the need for standards in practice,” he says. “However, institutional bureaucracy can often impede the ability of the health care provider to do what is needed for the patient.”

Arturo also finds basic wound care knowledge lacking in medical education. “Wound care is often not an integrated component of basic patient care,” he says. “As a result, RNs who provide care in the emergency room or acute care settings often fail to address these issues adequately. It is my hope that nurses at all practice levels will be required to have basic knowledge regarding wound assessment and management.”

Arturo believes there is much to accomplish in the future for this specialty, especially with regard to improving patient care. “Wound management and treatment need to be augmented and strengthened,” he says. “People considering this specialty should recognize they have the potential to truly make a difference for both the profession and in the lives of the patients who receive care.”

Arturo draws his role models and inspiration from his parents and grandparents, whose actions, he says, demonstrated a life led in service to others is most rewarding. His career choice was encouraged by his mentors and college professors. “I believe this work is important,” he says. “Not only for the profession, but also for promoting the well-being of so many patients in my scope of practice.” ■

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