

Groundbreaking Research Changes Outlook for Lymphedema Patients

Pneumatic compression device shown to provide major clinical benefit, while lowering the overall cost of care

MINNEAPOLIS, October 7, 2015 — Lymphedema currently affects more than five million people in the United States and over 250 million worldwide. It is a common vascular disease caused by damaged or poorly functioning lymphatic vessels that leads to swelling in affected areas of the body. If left untreated, this tissue swelling can be painful and is often associated with a loss of function, high risk of infection, and lower quality of life. While lymphedema is a non-curable, chronic, and progressive condition, its symptoms can be controlled with various treatments.

Until now, there has been limited research to define the clinical outcomes and cost effectiveness of pneumatic compression devices for the treatment of lymphedema. A study just published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Dermatology*, has defined the health impact of an advanced lymphedema treatment device on clinical events and cost of care. Study authors included leading experts in lymphedema and public health research from the University of Minnesota, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, and Stanford University.

This investigation represents one of the largest studies ever performed to evaluate the impact of a lymphedema treatment on health outcomes and cost of care. The authors analyzed 718 lymphedema patients from across the United States over a 5-year period (2007-2013) from a large national administrative database, and evaluated clinical events and costs for a 12-month period prior to and during a 12-month period of treatment.

The study demonstrated that the use of an advanced pneumatic compression device, the Flexitouch® System (Tactile Medical, Minneapolis, Minnesota) significantly benefited patients with lymphedema by reducing key adverse clinical events and healthcare costs. The Flexitouch System, a treatment used by patients at home, inflates over swollen areas of the limb or trunk to facilitate the movement of excess fluid out of the affected areas. Remarkably, after use of the Flexitouch System, lymphedema patients demonstrated significant reductions in episodes of cellulitis - a form of skin infection common to lymphedema patients. From this large data source, the authors evaluated clinical events and costs in two patient subgroups, those with and without cancer-related lymphedema. Patients in each group experienced a dramatic 79% and 75% reduction in the rate of cellulitis episodes, respectively.

“Healthy lymphatic vessels are – very simply and without controversy – essential to good health. By studying a very large group of patients offered this modern treatment, delivered within the patient’s own home, and then carefully measuring the impact, we were extremely gratified that these skin infections were lowered by nearly 80% within one year,” said Alan T. Hirsch, M.D., Director of the Vascular Medicine Program at the University of Minnesota Medical School and Chief Medical Officer of Tactile Medical. “A device used at home can provide amazing reduction – for the patient and for the nation – of these skin infections, associated morbidity and cost. This is the very definition of a public health success.”

Patients who used a Flexitouch device reduced their overall healthcare utilization (defined by decreased outpatient clinic, inpatient hospital, and physical therapy visits), which lowered their healthcare costs. Among cancer patients, total lymphedema-related costs per patient, excluding medical equipment, were reduced by 37%. The reduction in costs for patients without cancer was 36%.

“Tactile Medical was honored to be part of this research,” said Jerry Mattys, CEO of Tactile Medical. “We are dedicated to improving the health of individuals with lymphedema throughout their life. This begins at the time of lymphedema diagnosis and continues with best-in-class customer service, customized in-home training, and objectively measuring the health impact of our products.”

The study, “The Cutaneous, Net Clinical, and Economic Benefits of Advanced Pneumatic Compression Devices in Patients with Lymphedema” was published on October 7, 2015 by the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Dermatology*. Additional information about Flexitouch and the study can be found at TactileMedical.com.

About Tactile Medical

Tactile Medical headquartered in Minneapolis, MN is a leader in lymphedema and venous ulcer therapies, serving tens of thousands of patients throughout the U.S. The home therapy device company manufactures and provides products for patients with chronic edema, including the Flexitouch® system, an advanced pneumatic compression device and Entre, a simple pneumatic compression device. Tactile Medical also offers the ACTitouch Adaptive Compression Therapy system, an ambulatory, dual-compression device for patients with venous leg ulcers. Tactile Medical’s mission is to advance the standard of care in at-home therapies for chronic diseases and improve patients’ health and quality of life. Visit www.tactilemedical.com for more information.