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The effect of hyperbaric oxygen in the enhancement of healing in selected problem wounds

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Problem wounds represent a significant and growing challenge to our healthcare system. The incidence and prevalence of these wounds are increasing in the population, resulting in growing utilization of healthcare resources and dollars expended. Venous leg ulcers represent the most common lower extremity wound seen in ambulatory wound care centers, with recurrences frequent and outcomes often less than satisfactory. Pressure ulcers are common in patients in long-term institutional care settings adding significant increases in cost, disability and liability. Foot ulcers in patients with diabetes contribute to more than half of lower-extremity amputations in the United States in a group at risk, representing only 3 percent of the population [1]. In response to this challenge, specialized programs have emerged designed to identify and manage these patients, using standardized protocols and a variety of new technologies to improve outcomes. Hyperbaric oxygen treatment (HBO2T) has been increasingly utilized in an adjunctive role in the care of many of these patients, coinciding with optimized patient and local wound care.