OPTIFORM Made to Measure Flat Knit Garments in the management of Lymphoedema / Chronic Oedema

INTRODUCTION:
The management of Lymphoedema and Chronic oedema with compression is a well-established practice and is central to the successful management of the condition long term.

OPTIFORM Made to Measure flat knit, a flat knit product in both a strong and flexible fabric from SIGVARIS was launched in June 2016 and is available on prescription.

Patient satisfaction for its comfort, fit and control of swelling was highlighted in an evaluation of the product within 6 NHS clinics.

LYMPHOEDEMA
Lymphoedema is a chronic and often progressive swelling resulting from failure of the lymphatic system to drain fluid from the interstitial spaces (Rockson and Rivera 2008) There are two main types of Lymphoedema:

PRIMARY: is chronic oedema caused by a developmental abnormality of the lymphatic system (Mortimer1995)

SECONDARY: is the most common form of oedema affecting adults and is most common following surgery for cancer but can also occur due to injury or infection.

Lymphoedema management comprises on several modalities taken together to make an individual care plan for the patient.

Fig1. Components of Lymphoedema management

COMPRESSION:
Depending on the extent of the swelling, compression therapy can be achieved using compression garments. It is essential that the patient has been fully assessed and is treated according to their individual needs (Fig 1).

Limb shape is a key factor in compression hosiery. If there is some distortion in shape of the limb then circular knit garments are not likely to deliver accurate graduated compression. Flat knit garments are knitted flat and then stitched together making them thicker and sturdier and therefore more useful for patients with severe oedema or more misshapen limb(s) (Hopkins 2008) Due to their increased stiffness they sit on the tissues providing a lower resting pressure and are less likely to cut in or cause a tourniquet effect. (Lymphoedema Framework, Template for Practice: Compression hosiery in lymphoedema 2006)

OPTIFORM Made to Measure garments are available in FLEX and HOLD fabrics.

OPTIFORM FLEX
RAL Class 1(18-21mmHg)
RAL Class 2 (23-32mmHg)
Available in Beige and Black

FLEX: An innovative, comfortable fabric which provides softness against the skin as well as being durable

OPTIFORM HOLD
RAL Class 1(18-21mmHg)
RAL Class 2 (23-32mmHg)
RAL Class 3 (34- 46mmHg)

HOLD: A firmer fabric which offers the required support while still allowing free movement

OTHER THERAPIES:
- Skin Care
- Compression Therapy
- Exercise / Weight Management
- Lymphatic Drainage: MLD / SLD
- Surgical Techniques

Patient Centred Assessment => EXPERT PATIENT

TRADEMARKS: OPTIFORM®

SIGVARIS

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CASE STUDY

Mr X is a 68 year old retired policeman who has had Lymphoedema affecting both legs (left leg more than right) for 3 years. He has suffered from recurrent episodes of cellulitis which resulted in his leg swelling being uncontrolled.

He previously wore flat knit compression stockings on a daily basis, but he continued to have episodes of cellulitis which led to his leg swelling increasing each time. He was unable to wear normal trousers due the size of his leg and had worn tracksuit bottoms for many years.

He was managed within one of the evaluation clinics with:

- Skin care,
- Exercise,
- Compression therapy: Flat knit, Below Knee (AD), Class 3 (34 – 46mmHg)

Mr X agreed to take part in the product evaluation and whilst he continued with his management plan of skin care and exercises, his compression garments were changed to OPTIFORM HOLD, below knee, compression class 3 (34-46mmHg). He was asked to assess and comment on the product for its fit, comfort and toleration throughout the day.

He reported that the garments were comfortable, fitted well and supported his limb. He also reported that the episodes of cellulitis and inflammation from previous episodes had reduced since wearing OPTIFORM HOLD and he lost a total of 1,067mls in volume from his left leg over 12 weeks.

Feedback during Evaluation:

Initial Fitting: “Very comfortable... fit of the garment at the ankle is excellent”

Week 1: “Much better control of my swelling in OPTIFORM garments”

Month 1: “Since wearing (OPTIFORM) garments my swelling has significantly improved”

Month 2: Overall impression of the garment and its effect increased from ‘Very Good to EXCELLENT!’

Month 3: “…the most comfortable hosiery I have ever worn!... ‘The garment never needs adjusting like (my previous stockings) did”

Overall:

“I was only able to wear tracksuit bottoms with my previous compression stockings…

With OPTIFORM I am able to wear trousers!!”

References:

Lymphoedema Framework (2006) Template for Practice: Compression hosiery in lymphoedema LONDON: MEP Ltd