

Didactic and hands-on education, such as attending wound sessions at the American Academy of Dermatology (<http://www.aad.org>) or wound healing meetings (<http://www.sawc.org>) and learning systematic evaluation and management of VLU (and other chronic wounds) from evidence-based guidelines for chronic wounds (Wound Healing Society; <http://www.woundheal.org>), is necessary. Dermatologists can assess their practice of treating VLUs through the newly released performance improvement continuing medical education activity provided by the American Academy of Dermatology. In addition, manufacturers of compression bandages create systems to assist in proper application and educate practitioners on appli-

cation, so use of these systems, as opposed to elastic (acetype) wraps, would provide more standardized care. However, direct monitoring of individual patients for adequate compression is not routine. Recently developed real-time subbandage pressure monitors using fiberoptic force sensors might help change that and ensure that all patients receive optimal compression. Finally, assessment of wound improvement through close tracking of wound size reduction by measurements or photographs is needed, and the use of templates for patient care and procedures can be incorporated into electronic medical records, which can serve as a resource to ensure that all elements of evaluation and management are performed.

#### ARTICLE INFORMATION

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#### NOTABLE NOTES

### Two Important Italian Scientists of the Renaissance and the First Book Ever Devoted to Nevi

Filippo Pesapane, MD; Antonella Coggi, MD; Raffaele Gianotti, MD

Gerolamo Cardano (1501-1576) was an important figure in the medical world of the Renaissance: he wrote more than 200 works on medicine, mathematics, physics, philosophy, religion, and music.<sup>1</sup>

His gambling led him to formulate elementary rules in probability, making him one of the founders of the field. In 1520, he entered the University of Pavia, where he studied medicine. In 1525, Cardano repeatedly applied to the College of Physicians in Milan but was not admitted owing to his combative reputation and illegitimate birth. Eventually, he managed to develop a considerable reputation as a physician, and his services were highly valued at the royal courts. He was the first to describe typhoid fever, and in 1553 he cured the Scottish Archbishop of St Andrews of a disease that had left him speechless and was thought incurable.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, Cardano's popularity and fame were based largely on his books dealing with scientific and philosophical questions, especially *De Subtilitate Rerum* ("The Subtlety of Things"), a collection of physical experiments and inventions, interspersed with anecdotes. Among his many books on medicine, alchemy, and natural phenomena, he also wrote *De Metoscopia* (literally: "About the observation of the front"). In this book he explained his theory that it should be possible to identify the character of a person looking the appearance of his frontal skin. He also speculates on the meaning of the nevi.<sup>3</sup>

Inspired by Cardano's ideas, Ludovico Settala (1552-1633) wrote the first book ever devoted to nevi (*De Naevis*) in 1626. According to Set-

tala it was possible to understand the qualities and defects of a person by observing the position of the nevi in his body. After his studies with the Jesuits in Milan and graduation with a medical degree at Pavia, he applied himself to problems of public hygiene. He published *De Peste et Pestiferis Affectibus Libri Quinque* ("Five Books on the Effects of the Plague and Pestiferous") in 1622 and *Della Preservazione della Peste* ("The Preservation of the Plague") in 1630. Settala is featured in Alessandro Manzoni's masterpiece *Promessi Sposi* as an exemplary physician who, because of his foresight and rare knowledge of hygiene, was actually accused of creating and spreading the plague.

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