



# LINK

POWERED BY



## Celebrating **10 Years** of LINK

A decade of connected expertise, engagement and improved patient outcomes in wound care





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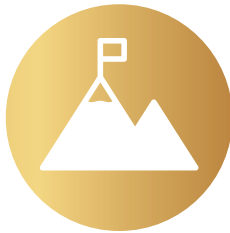
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# LINK AT A GLANCE

LINK (Learn, Inform, Network, Knowledge) is a multidimensional framework for professional education, engagement and collaboration, powered by HARTMANN. Launched in 2016, it was created to address a growing global need for accessible, evidence-based wound care education and to foster meaningful collaboration among healthcare professionals (HCPs) working across wound management.



## Addressing core challenges

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Across healthcare systems, HCPs consistently highlighted several core challenges: fragmented and inconsistent education, uneven access to reliable evidence-based guidance, limited opportunities for meaningful peer exchange beyond national borders, and insufficient support for translating scientific knowledge into everyday clinical decision-making. In addition, busy clinical environments characterised by time pressure and staffing constraints, as well as geographic separation, meant that many clinicians were effectively learning in isolation and relying on local custom rather than shared best practice.

LINK was designed specifically to address each of these challenges. The fragmented education landscape is countered by a unified global curriculum of accredited e-learning, workshops and expert-led congresses. Uneven access to evidence is addressed through the open-access LINK Hub, which delivers peer-reviewed, consensus-backed content to any registered HCP, regardless of geography or seniority. The isolation of clinicians learning alone is broken by LINK's network of peer-to-peer exchange, not just at congress level, but through round-tables, local advisory boards and digital forums where clinicians share difficult cases, challenge assumptions and build lasting professional relationships. And the translation gap between evidence and practice

is bridged by formats that are explicitly clinical and directly actionable. From the outset, the ambition was to build a trusted, inclusive and collaborative peer-to-peer network that brings together all levels of HCPs, including nurses, physicians, surgeons, allied health professionals, researchers and international opinion leaders, within a single educational and networking ecosystem. Rather than functioning as a standalone tool or a series of disconnected events, LINK connects global expertise with local clinical reality and enables knowledge to move in both directions, always with the aim of improving patient outcomes.



## The four pillars

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- **Learn:** Continuous education of wound care professionals through seminars, workshops, e-learning, webinars and congresses
- **Inform:** Providing updated clinical recommendations, best practices, and access to current evidence and consensus documents
- **Network:** Facilitating peer-to-peer exchange, expert panels, round-table discussions and community-building across local and global levels
- **Knowledge:** Building a shared, growing knowledge base that supports evidence-based wound care practice and improved patient outcomes.



## Connecting peer-to-peer, global and local

LINK is distinctive in connecting the global and the local: international experts and local practitioners form a single, bidirectional collaborative network. While the programme operates at the level of international congresses and global expert panels, it equally supports small-scale workshops in hospitals, regional round-tables and local advisory boards. National affiliates are encouraged to grow their own LINK communities, bringing the framework to clinicians who may not attend international events.

The LINK community has grown well beyond its founding expectations, with more countries requesting to join each year.

**'The connection, the real link between personal and professional interaction. When these two elements come together, work becomes a passion.'**

– Nurse, UK



## Educational activities

One of LINK's defining strengths is its operation at every level of healthcare, from international congresses attended by hundreds of healthcare professionals, to small workshops run by HARTMANN representatives inside individual hospitals. The full spectrum of LINK educational and engagement activity includes:

- International congresses
- Symposia and expert panels at major international wound care events
- Regional and national advisory boards
- Workshops and seminars in hospitals and clinical settings
- Round-table discussions with local experts
- Webinars and online live events
- CPD-accredited e-learning on the LINK Hub

- Podcast series
- VR simulation training (deployable in hospital learning labs or via HARTMANN representatives)
- Scientific publications, consensus documents and case studies
- Social media campaigns and news updates.

This breadth is intentional. LINK was not limited to a key opinion leader program or an exclusively international initiative. A nurse with a difficult clinical case, a GP seeking guidance on referral pathways, a country's wound care society seeking to align with international best practice are all within LINK's scope. National affiliates are empowered and encouraged to run their own LINK-branded activities, creating a self-sustaining educational ecosystem with real-world impact.



## Real-world impact on clinical practice

LINK produces measurable results in the real world. Delegates who engage with LINK activities report tangible changes to their practice that have improved patient outcomes, including:

- More structured approaches to complex wound management, developed through exchange with international peers
- Refined perioperative pathways and standardised care protocols with measurably improved consistency, safety and efficiency
- Improved confidence in wound assessment, diagnosis and treatment selection
- Deeper integration of negative pressure wound therapy (NPWT) into surgical and postoperative management
- New international collaborations, such as a joint project on virtual reality in wound education that began as a congress introduction.

**'It may be a small detail, slightly different dressing fixation, a technical nuance, but it is something I can implement immediately to improve my technique.'**

– Surgeon, Poland

Through sharing real clinical cases during onsite or online activities, LINK also enables peer support. This community based problem solving is one of the most distinctive features of the LINK network and directly benefits patients.

# MILESTONES AND IMPACT

Since its launch in 2016, LINK has grown into a multifaceted educational and professional engagement framework spanning five continents. The LINK international congresses have brought thousands of clinicians together to share evidence and forge lasting professional relationships. The LINK Hub extended that reach to over tens of thousands of registered users worldwide; a patented VR training programme broke new ground in immersive clinical education; ZOE became the world's first AI-powered virtual assistant in wound care; and a growing podcast series brought expert clinical conversation to wherever HCPs happen to be.



## LINK for Wound Healing Congresses

The LINK for Wound Healing Congress has been held since 2017 and has become a flagship event in the global wound care calendar. Over the past decade, the Congress has welcomed thousands of HCPs from all continents and more than 150 expert speakers, drawn together to exchange knowledge and clinical opinion, debate emerging evidence and drive medical progress in wound care.

### 2017 – Belfast, Northern Ireland



Organised in collaboration with the *Journal of Wound Care* (JWC), the inaugural LINK Congress in Belfast brought together almost 300 delegates from around the world. Focused on wound bed preparation and epithelialisation, the congress divided into two parallel streams: Advanced Wound Healing and NPWT.

Key scientific sessions addressed:

- Clinical challenges in wound bed preparation and perturbed inflammation

- The role of keratinocytes and cellular mechanisms in epithelialisation
- Mechanisms and clinical evidence for advanced wound dressings
- Autolytic debridement, biofilm management, and management of hard-to-heal wounds
- Management of burns in children, post-surgical wounds, diabetic foot ulcers and pressure ulcers
- NPWT applications and wound healing trajectories

Delegates from the inaugural congress reflected that international exchange was immediately valuable:

**'Each meeting with colleagues from all over the world who experience the same problems that I do is valuable. When we get back home, we can resolve problems better and can implement changes in our daily practice.'**  
– 2017 congress participant

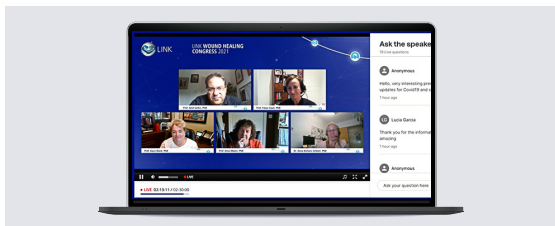
### 2019 – Budapest, Hungary



The second LINK Congress, held in Budapest in 2019, brought together delegates from across the globe to focus on two core clinical areas: wound exudate management and epithelialisation. Sessions explored the international consensus document on exudate, challenges in exudate management, and the respective roles of superabsorbent dressings and NPWT in exudate control. Sessions on epithelialisation examined growth factor science, the BOOST CLOSURE study on hydrated polyurethane-containing dressings, and clinical experiences in promoting re-epithelialisation. A

dedicated NPWT expert panel addressed indications, pressure optimisation and outcomes in plastic and reconstructive surgery. The congress closed with a dinner and the LINK Award for best scientific contribution, recognising the quality of research produced within the global LINK community.

## 2021 – virtual



The third LINK Congress took place in October 2021 in a fully virtual format, organised by HARTMANN in partnership with *Wounds International* and was the first LINK Congress delivered entirely online. Responding to the global disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, the two-day programme maintained full CPD accreditation and brought together international wound experts through live sessions, satellite symposia and interactive discussions. Sessions addressed advanced wound healing, NPWT and emerging consensus in wound care, delivered by a faculty spanning multiple countries and specialties. An on-demand version was made available free of charge to HCPs worldwide, extending the reach of the congress well beyond those who attended live, as well as demonstrating how the LINK educational and professional engagement framework could continue to serve its global community under exceptional circumstances.

**‘This event highlighted the challenges HCPs encounter in clinical practice and the solutions that they apply for improving the quality of life of the patients.’ – Wound Care Researcher and 2021 congress participant**

## 2023 – Barcelona, Spain



The fourth LINK Congress, held in Barcelona in 2023, marked LINK’s return to large-scale in-person gathering under the theme ‘Wound Balance’. The

2-day programme focused on how regaining balance in the wound microenvironment can normalise healing, improve patient experience and enhance quality of life. The Wound Balance plenary session set the scientific framework for a congress that also covered NPWT, advanced wound care and limb salvage. A renewed and palpable sense of connection was described by delegates: the more intimate setting fostered meaningful interactions, with hands-on workshops, poster sessions and case-based discussions enabling the kind of direct engagement between clinicians that defines LINK at its best. Several collaborations began here, including joint work on virtual reality in wound care education, demonstrating the lasting value of the LINK network beyond the congress itself. A Spanish-language session with an extended audience of Spanish HCPs focussed on more local topics.

## 2025 – Berlin, Germany



More than 300 HCPs and HARTMANN colleagues from 17 countries gathered in Berlin for the fifth LINK Congress. A plenary session opened the event, with global experts presenting the new World Union of Wound Healing Societies consensus on Wound Balance: bridging science and clinical practice.

Sessions covered:

- Wound healing trajectories and the science of Wound Balance
- NPWT indications, pressure ranges and optimal wound types
- Hands-on virtual reality experiences enhanced by AI
- Poster walks and interactive expert panels
- Live podcast recordings in collaboration with *Wounds International*
- Dedicated German-language educational sessions

The Berlin congress introduced new learning formats designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice, and through that, intertwine novel science and real patient care.

**‘The conference was a catalyst for clinical progress, innovation and meaningful connection’ – 2025 congress participant**



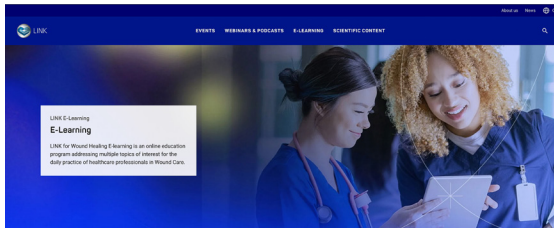
## The LINK Hub

Launched in 2020, the LINK Hub is the digital home of the LINK framework. Recognised rapidly as a wound-dedicated engagement platform, it fosters trust, peer-to-peer discussion and participation, with a strong impact on advancing HCP education across clinical levels and geographies.

### Scale and reach

- Over 337 000 interactions recorded on the platform
- Users span multiple countries, including Australia, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Spain, the UK and the US
- Open access for all HCPs with no subscription.

### Content offering



- CPD-accredited e-learning modules covering fundamental and advanced wound care topics
- Scientific articles and consensus documents from organisations, such as World Union of Wound Healing Societies (WUWHS), European Wound Management Association (EWMA) and International Wound Infection Institute (IWII)
- 'Wound Care Insights' podcast episodes
- Webinars, news and event information
- 'Made easy' practical resources for everyday clinical use
- Clear learning pathways, interactive tools and professional development certificates.

The platform is designed for accessibility, enabling clinicians to update their knowledge at their own pace, according to their specific learning needs and clinical context. Content is grounded in peer-reviewed science and consensus documents, making ZOE's and the platform's guidance more reliable than generic internet searches.



## Virtual reality wound care training



HARTMANN's virtual reality wound care simulation training represents a world first in wound care education. Launched at the World Union of Wound Healing Societies Congress in 2022 and developed under a patented algorithm, it is the only VR simulation programme of its kind in the wound care field, and demonstrates the unique advancements that can come from collaboration on such a large scale.

### The case for VR in wound care



HCPs can face barriers to meaningful clinical training: logistical constraints, time pressures in busy clinical environments, limited access to specific wound type and the ethical impossibility of practising on real patients. VR addresses all of these. Evidence from other specialties including surgery and orthopaedics demonstrates that VR training produces significantly better outcomes than standard learning approaches, with higher aggregate assessment scores, more steps completed correctly, and faster skill acquisition.

In wound care specifically, VR can:

- Provide safe, realistic clinical scenarios without risk to patients
- Allow HCPs to make bold treatment choices, 'get it wrong' and learn through trial and error
- Reduce the resource burden (clinician time, costs, patient presence) of traditional practical training
- Enable remote, autonomous or group learning

- Deliver checklist-style objective assessment to identify areas for improvement
- Engage through gamification, improving memory, skill retention and learner motivation
- Potentially reduce patient pain during procedures.

### How it works



The user wears a VR headset and handheld controllers. The training places them in a lifelike clinical scenario where they must:

- Assess the patient and evaluate their history
- Examine and diagnose the wound type
- Select appropriate dressings and treatment
- Change dressings and track progress over time
- See the consequences of correct or incorrect choices visualised through wound progression or regression.

The format prioritises clinical reasoning and decision-making, mirroring real-world practice. Hand movements and errors during dressing application are corrected. Users emerge better equipped to identify wound types, select treatment options confidently and deliver safe, effective care.

The training complements HARTMANN's wider educational offering of seminars, conferences, workshops and digital learning, and has been deployed internationally with equipment sent to clinicians in Australia and beyond.

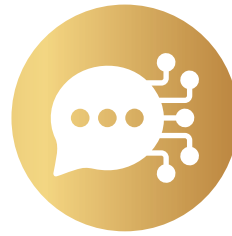
### User responses

**'Impressive method, the VR simulation scenarios push you to think like in real-life clinical conditions.'**  
– Surgeon, Chile

**'An excellent learning method for general practitioners and nurses... you are excited to do it again and again and you never forget because you are really doing it.'** – Surgeon, Poland

**'We can simulate as many clinical scenarios as we need, very useful and memorable experience.'**  
– Head of Nursing, UAE

One 2025 LINK Congress delegate reported that international collaboration made there in Barcelona had led to an ongoing joint project developing extended reality tools for wound care education – a direct outcome of LINK networking.



## ZOE AI-powered virtual assistant

Integrated into the LINK for Wound Healing platform in 2025, ZOE is the first AI-powered virtual assistant designed to support wound care professionals. ZOE was named a finalist in the 2025 A.I. Awards, operated by The Cloud Awards, an international programme that has recognised leaders and innovators in AI and machine learning since 2011, receiving entries from across North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia Pacific. HARTMANN's ZOE solution was shortlisted alongside global technology organisations including Cognizant, IBM, EY, McAfee, HeyGen and Cisco, a remarkable achievement for a healthcare-sector AI product and a mark of the genuine innovation ZOE represents in clinical wound care.

### Key capabilities



ZOE is designed to give wound care professionals real-time, evidence-based clinical guidance and educational support, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Key capabilities include:

- **Easy access to reliable knowledge:** ZOE helps HCPs quickly find wound care-relevant information (including clinical guidelines, e-learning modules and scientific articles) which is grounded in peer-reviewed science and documents, i.e. from WUWHS, EWMA and IWII. Unlike generic internet searches, ZOE's responses are trustworthy and specific to wound care.
- **Personalised and context-aware guidance:** ZOE guides users not just to broad content but to the specific article or e-learning course that matches their clinical question or area of interest. Clinician asking questions receive a tailored, relevant summary and direct links, saving time and reducing cognitive load.
- **Support for continuous education:** For those wishing to deepen their knowledge, ZOE directs

users to LINK's CPD-accredited e-learning modules and keeps them updated with emerging evidence, including developing concepts such as Wound Balance and biomarker research.

- **Bridging knowledge gaps:** For less experienced clinicians or those in regions with limited wound care infrastructure, ZOE opens access to high-quality specialist content. For wound care experts, it acts as a quick-reference knowledge navigator, supporting clinical decision-making efficiently.
- **Multilingual access:** ZOE provides multilingual access to specialised medical information, helping to break down language barriers for international HCPs and reinforcing LINK's commitment to global and community reach.
- **Scalability:** As a virtual assistant, ZOE can support many users simultaneously, with no waiting time, thereby scaling in ways that human educational support cannot.



## Podcasts

Podcasts form a distinctive and growing component of the LINK framework, giving wound care professionals access to clinical insights in an engaging and accessible format.

### Wound Care Insights



The podcast series 'Wound Care Insights', launched jointly with *Wounds International*, explores the human side of wound care: what drives passion in the field, how careers grow from first steps to leadership, and how wound care professionals navigate complex areas such as palliative care. Episodes feature expert-led conversations with an international cast of wound care professionals. Episodes are available with AI-powered translation to maximise international reach. All podcasts are published on the LINK Hub,

Spotify and Apple Podcasts, as well as the Wounds International website.

### Live podcast episodes

Further podcast episodes have been organised and recorded in connection with LINK events including live recordings at the 2025 Berlin Congress.



One episode brought together US experts Laura Swoboda, Alton Johnson and Trent Brookshier, hosted by Prof Karen Ousey, to explore the concept of Wound Balance. The discussion emphasised a shift from treating wounds in isolation to addressing the full picture: the wound environment, the patient's overall health and the wider healthcare system. With insights into tools like BIOMES for early assessment, alongside real-world challenges such as healthcare access, cost and social determinants, the conversation highlighted the need for early intervention, education and multidisciplinary collaboration. Ultimately, it reinforced that successful healing depends not just on clinical decisions, but on empowering patients and understanding their lived reality.



Another episode featured French experts Magali Marques (Wound Care Nurse Specialist) and Dr Florian Dumas (Head of Internal Medicine, Le Creusot Hospital, France), sharing insights from 5 years of running an interdisciplinary wound consultation. Among the key clinical messages were that holistic wound assessment is essential to understanding non-healing wounds, as well as that strong networks between community nurses, GPs, hospital teams and pharmacists shorten referral times and improve outcomes. The episode also covered 'dressing nomadism', where frequent and inconsistent changes in dressing protocol can increase complexity and delay healing, and the guests discussed how patient priorities include pain, mobility limitations and exudate management.

# 10 VOICES FOR 10 YEARS

To mark a decade of LINK's impact, 10 wound care experts have shared their reflections on the framework's evolution, the role it has played in shaping their professional journeys and the ways they hope to contribute to its continued growth in the years ahead.



**Alton R Johnson**

**Podiatric Surgeon and Clinical Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, Michigan, US**

Dr Johnson has attended the LINK Congress in Barcelona (2023) and Berlin (2025). In Barcelona, the renewed sense of connection following the pandemic was immediately evident: the intimate setting fostered meaningful interactions and a diverse range of thought-provoking lectures. Berlin offered a contrasting but equally valuable experience, with the larger venue enabling connections with specialists from across the globe. At both congresses, hands-on workshops were a highlight, and the opportunity to engage with virtual reality wound care education, with distinct approaches at each site, enriched his understanding of emerging educational technologies in clinical practice.

LINK has had a meaningful impact on both clinical approach and teaching. One notable addition following Berlin event was a more deliberate integration of the Wound Balance concept, including the BIOMES framework, for early intervention and management into wound evaluation and management, ensuring learners adopt a comprehensive and systematic approach from the outset, implemented immediately on return to the US.

LINK has been most beneficial across three interlocking domains: education, networking and the exchange of experience. The lectures are consistently clear, practical and unbiased, making the learning immediately translatable to patient care and teaching. The networking opportunities are unmatched, an active exchange of ideas among leaders in the field that remains strongly

patient-centred. A colleague met at the Barcelona congress has since become a collaborator on advancing virtual reality in wound care education, a lasting example of LINK's value beyond the congress itself.

Looking ahead, Dr Johnson hopes to return to the LINK podium to share insights on diabetic foot ulceration, and to present an extended reality project in wound care education currently in development.



**Astrid Probst**

**Wound, Ostomy and Continence Lead, Reutlingen District Hospitals, Reutlingen, Germany**

Astrid Probst has attended the LINK Congress on three occasions: in 2019, 2023 and 2025, and consistently values the combination of clinically stimulating topics, the opportunity to experience VR technology and the networking that each event enables. Whether insights translate immediately into practice at Reutlingen depends on their scope and clinical applicability, but LINK offers something more immediate: the ability to reach out to fellow wound experts when facing a particularly complex presentation. 'If you have a special patient with a special problem, you can ask other wound experts for help' that direct, peer-to-peer access to international expertise is what sets LINK apart.

The educational, networking and experience exchange dimensions of LINK are equally valued. Looking to the future, Astrid would like to see LINK develop further content on wound assessment across diverse skin tones and on the practical integration of AI into everyday wound care practice.



## Beáta Grešš Halász

Assistant Professor & Researcher in Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, Šafárik University, Košice, Slovakia

Beáta Grešš Halász first encountered LINK at the 2021 virtual congress, where she learned about HARTMANN's VR module for wound care education, a discovery that would shape her subsequent work. She attended in person in Barcelona (2023) and Berlin (2025), finding that each combined scientific excellence with an open and inspiring atmosphere: Barcelona for its up-to-date clinical insights and networking; Berlin for its practically oriented content from leading experts in wound management.

The impact on her practice has been direct and lasting. As a university educator implementing simulation-based learning at Šafárik University, she has used insights from LINK activities to develop targeted scenarios focused on wound assessment, clinical decision-making and interdisciplinary communication, with initial adaptations introduced within weeks and a more structured programme built over the following 3–6 months. A further strand of work, prompted by topics raised in Barcelona, is a research study on quality of life in patients with hard-to-heal wounds, an area she regards as central to holistic, patient-centred care.

What she values most about LINK is its combination of scientific rigour and collaborative spirit, an environment in which ideas around simulation in education, pressure ulcer prevention and patient-centred approaches can be openly discussed and developed. International connections have enriched her perspective on how practices and educational methods vary across healthcare systems, and have opened the door to potential research partnerships.

Looking ahead, she would like to contribute through workshops and working groups focused on integrating simulation-based learning into medical and nursing curricula, and through international collaboration on pressure ulcer prevention and her developing research focus on patient quality of life.



## Carsten Hampel-Kalthoff

Wound Care Nurse Expert and Managing Director, OrgaMed, Dortmund, Germany

Carsten Hampel-Kalthoff's involvement with LINK spans two congresses, Budapest (2017) and Barcelona (2023), and each left a strong impression shaped as much by personal interactions as by scientific content. What he remembers most clearly are the conversations with colleagues from other countries, the informal exchanges during breaks and the sense of connection at the congress banquet. For him, these human dimensions of LINK are inseparable from its professional value.

Working in a setting that already maintains a high professional standard, he did not anticipate major changes to his clinical practice. But LINK offered something equally meaningful: confirmation that the approaches used in his own environment align with those applied internationally. Hearing colleagues abroad describe similar strategies provided genuine reassurance and a sense of shared direction, a reminder that rigorous practice is not confined to any single healthcare system.

His contribution to LINK has also been significant. In Budapest, he presented on compression therapy and the importance of structured educational measures, receiving immediate and encouraging feedback. Colleagues told him they were taking away ideas for bringing education in compression therapy more sharply into focus, a direct example of how LINK can inspire practical improvements across borders.

What he values most is the insight LINK provides into how healthcare is organised in other countries: the differences in structure, the variety of medical and nursing strategies, and how these approaches can be thoughtfully adapted to local practice and daily work. Looking ahead, he would welcome the opportunity to present the work carried out in his wound care centres and to continue the cycle of shared learning that defines the LINK community.



## Emma Candas

Geriatrician and Wound Care Referent, Hospital Sainte-Périne, Paris, France

Dr Candas has attended every LINK Congress since 2017, serving as a speaker and moderator. These congresses have become defining events in her professional career: key moments of exchange and sharing around wounds and their management. The plenary sessions stand out for their ability to go beyond national borders, enabling direct confrontation of practices between professionals from different backgrounds. The richness of those exchanges, concrete and grounded in the reality of the field, is both stimulating and useful in daily practice.

LINK has contributed to the evolution of her clinical practice. Through participation in several international boards, she has worked with colleagues from other countries on improving care for patients with wounds, including developing a global and multidimensional approach to Wound Balance with particular attention to quality of life. These collaborations have refined her therapeutic choices and led to more structured approaches to complex wound management.

The exchange of experience is what she finds most valuable: the opportunity to meet professionals who are deeply invested in wound healing, from different health systems, enriching collective reflection. What makes LINK unique is the quality of those exchanges and the spirit of collaboration, a genuine desire to share and improve practice, always placing the patient at the centre of care. As a geriatrician with long experience in advanced dressings and wound management in older and often complex patients, she has been able to contribute this perspective through clinical cases and has been equally enriched by discovering the experience of her colleagues.

She would welcome continued involvement as a speaker and through participation in content development or international working groups, and would support the development of more interactive formats and longer-term collaborative projects between participants.



## Erzsébet Szabóné Révész

Adjunct Surgeon, Szent György University Teaching Hospital, Székesfehérvár, Hungary

Dr Szabóné Révész has attended three LINK congresses. In Barcelona, the NPWT session stood out most: hearing colleagues present treatments applied successfully in many new fields offered inspiration and directly transferable insight. After each event, she has made a point of incorporating what she has learned into her routine as quickly as possible, finding the new perspectives easy to adopt in practice.

The three dimensions she found most enlightening, education, networking and the exchange of experience, have contributed to her development in distinct ways. The educational content has translated directly into her practice, enabling her to implement dressings and NPWT in new settings and avoid potential errors. Networking has been equally significant: LINK has allowed her to begin building international relationships and present internationally.

Maintaining contact with colleagues from different countries offers ongoing benefits: the exchange of experience, collaborative discussion of solutions to problems, and the opportunity to test new approaches in her own practice. Her own research contribution to the LINK community has centred on NPWT: specifically, assessing changes in bacterial load and the composition and depth of bacterial colonisation within the wound cavity during NPWT treatment, and examining how culture results influence antibiotic selection and further treatment planning.

Looking ahead, she would welcome a deeper focus within LINK on NPWT research findings and on the practical application of different protocols and approaches. She would be happy to contribute as a speaker in the preparation of educational materials or in the presentation of specific research projects.



## Guillaume Maxant

Vascular Surgeon, Haguenau Hospital,  
Haguenau, France

Dr Maxant has attended LINK congress in 2017 (Belfast) and 2025 (Berlin) presenting each time on incisional NPWT, specific wound therapies and education. He values LINK for a distinctive quality: its professional engagement format makes it genuinely easy to present a method or a case and receive a focused, practical discussion in return, something less commonly achieved at larger or more formal events.

The primary benefit has been the connections forged with colleagues and industry professionals. His collaboration with HARTMANN on VR-enhanced wound care education was established through LINK and has been essential to that ongoing work. Connecting with peers from other countries also offers insight into the discrete shifts in clinical practice across different healthcare systems. His own practice has evolved through incremental changes: careful, sustained improvements rather than a single disruptive shift.

To strengthen LINK further, Dr Maxant would welcome thematically focused sessions like those that worked well in LINK Congress Berlin. He intends to continue contributing in the same areas: incisional NPWT, specific wound therapies and education.



## Lenka Veverková

Associate Professor of Surgery, St Anne's University  
Hospital & Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Dr Veverková has attended all LINK Congresses since 2017, engaging actively at each. At the most recent congress in Berlin, she served as session chair, contributing to programme delivery and expert-level moderation. She finds the combination of interactive expert-led discussions and clinically oriented practical sessions to be LINK's core strength, particularly those addressing advanced wound care strategies and NPWT, which are central to her clinical focus.

Participation in LINK has had a measurable impact on clinical practice: refining perioperative pathways, advancing standardised care protocols and further integrating NPWT into surgical and postoperative management. Implementation required coordinated staff training, procedural alignment and revision of internal protocols over several months. But the resulting improvements in consistency, safety and efficiency of care have been both substantial and sustained.

LINK has been beneficial across multiple dimensions: access to evidence-based updates of high academic standard; sustainable professional relationships with clinicians and researchers across Europe; comparative insights into national and institutional approaches to surgical care; and active contribution to sessions that have supported academic and professional progression. Its uniqueness lies in a culture of intellectual openness and genuine willingness to share practical experience, particularly in areas where evidence is still evolving.

Dr Veverková would welcome continued involvement through session leadership, expert presentations and panel discussions, with a focus on surgical pathway optimisation and the further development of NPWT in complex wound management. She would also support strengthening continuity between annual meetings through structured post-congress follow-up and ongoing collaborative working groups.



### **Tomáš Kopal**

**Head of Dermatology, NsP Považská Bysxtrica,  
Slovakia**

Dr Kopal has attended LINK activities in 2019, 2023 and 2025, and speaks warmly about each congress. What he values most is the friendly atmosphere that actively encourages debate, not only in formal sessions, but in the informal meetings alongside them, where there is enough time to talk in depth on various topics with both friends and new acquaintances. He has rarely encountered so many informal international debates in a single setting.

The impact on practice has been both immediate and gradual: some lectures have prompted direct changes to diagnostic classifications and the optimisation of therapy; others have taken longer to absorb and implement. LINK has been beneficial across all dimensions: educational, networking, experience exchange and career development. This is because the atmosphere created there supports all of them simultaneously. 'Getting better and having fun at the same time is just the right combination.'

As a clinician from central-eastern Europe, Dr Kopal occupies a uniquely valuable position within the LINK community: able to bridge the perspectives of colleagues from highly resourced healthcare systems and those from less well-resourced settings who are doing their best despite real constraints. These exchanges are among the most interesting he has encountered at LINK. 'To take a direction, to improve, one must know where one stands. The only way to find that out is to look at others. And ask them.'

Dr Kopal has delivered several lectures at LINK and intends to continue doing so. He is confident in the programme's direction: 'Each time I have taken part, I have found some improvements. So just keep heading in the same direction.'



### **Tomasz Banasiewicz**

**Professor and Director of Surgery,  
Karol Marcinkowski University of Medical Sciences,  
Poznan, Poland**

Professor Banasiewicz has attended the LINK congresses in Belfast, Budapest and Barcelona. The activity he values most is the expert panel, where the goal is to structure indications for different types of NPWT, define optimal pressure ranges and identify appropriate wound types. 'Such discussions are an invaluable exchange of experience, and provide practical guidance for less experienced clinicians just beginning to use NPWT.'

His practice has evolved continuously through LINK. Every congress yields something practical to take away, whether a technical nuance that can be implemented immediately or a more concept requiring years of further development. 'I leave with new knowledge and updates, but also with a practical takeaway every time.'

Education and networking are the two dimensions he values most. Access at LINK to the latest studies and concepts, sometimes not yet published, is rare. The connections are sustained over time: he has been a guest at conferences organised by specialists he met through LINK and has invited outstanding experts to his own events. 'The atmosphere of open and friendly exchange is truly unique at LINK meetings.'

The benefits of connecting with peers internationally are almost too numerous to list. 'The sense that you are not alone in this pursuit, that there are partners for discussion who are equally engaged, motivated and constantly striving to do things better. This is exactly what LINK is: a place where you can always send a question or a photo of a difficult wound not only to outstanding professionals, but also simply to friends. When these two elements come together, work becomes a passion.'

As President-Elect of the Society of Polish Surgeons (2027–2029), he plans to promote LINK at other conferences, including at [www.chicamp.pl](http://www.chicamp.pl), and to host a dedicated LINK session at the national surgical conference in 2029, extending its reach to those unable to attend in person.

# THE FUTURE OF LINK

LINK will continue to connect on-site and online wound care experts, medical societies and local practitioners, building trustworthy collaboration at all levels and leveraging education in wound care for the benefit of caregivers and patients alike.

Over the past decade, LINK has grown from a flagship framework into a multidimensional educational and professional engagement platform that connects wound care professionals at every level, from bedside nurses and general practitioners to leading surgeons and international society presidents. It has delivered evidence-based education through the LINK Hub and CPD-accredited sessions; made novel contributions to wound care education with patented VR simulation and the world's first wound care AI assistant in ZOE; amplified clinical voices through a growing podcast offer; and built a peer-to-peer network that delegates describe as uniquely open, uniquely practical and uniquely patient-centred.

The ten expert voices gathered in these pages from a wide range of clinical specialties, speak to what LINK has already achieved. The second decade begins with the same ambition that drove the first: that every wound care professional, wherever they work, should have access to the knowledge, connections and community they need to deliver the very best care for the patients who depend on them.

As the LINK educational and professional engagement framework enters its second decade, it is positioned to:

- Grow the LINK community and active users onsite and online, deepening engagement and content quality.
- Continue expanding the LINK congress programme while deepening local and regional activity
- Foster the 'Wound Balance' concept, bridging science and clinical practice through consensus and continuing education
- Expand the reach of ZOE as an AI-powered educational resource, with potential new capabilities in personalised learning
- Develop VR training further as a cornerstone of immersive and simulation wound care education
- Maintain LINK's unique position at the intersection of the global and the local, ensuring that advances in wound care reach clinicians and ultimately patients everywhere.





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