

Italy ... The land of opportunity for wound care innovators.



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Giuseppe Mancullo has more than 28 years business experience in the Medical Device arena. He developed his career with Smith and Nephew Italy managing various departments. For the past 18 years he focused on the wound care industry leading project launches, project development, supporting the development of new therapeutic concepts (TIMECare) and participating on the Board of Clinical Associates.

An analysis of the Business Register dedicated to SUi (Innovative Start Ups) and SMEi (Innovative Small Medium Enterprises) identified twenty companies engaged in various areas of wound care. Medical devices made up 50% of registered SUi's; technologies were wide ranging from creams for the treatment of burns (Biokine WC, Adamas Biotech SRL) to silk fibroin (Epifibroin, Medisilk SPA) and PRP based dressings (Ematik Ready, Prometheus SRL).

Italy seeks to encourage these innovations through a series of financial concessions to support and encourage SUis and SMEs. 3.6% of the Ltd companies established in the last 5 years were registered as SUis. Published accounts for 2019 show unsurprisingly that 52.3% currently make a loss and that the more complex the technology, the higher the added value for each euro of production.

As in all economically developed countries, the Italian wound care market is dominated by large foreign multinationals with a significant presence of medium-sized Italian companies, some with a multinational profile. The sector is characterized by still widespread use of pharmaceutical and traditional technologies in all care settings.

The large companies show little if any inclination to incubate innovations, leaving room for smaller companies attracted by the high standards of clinical and scientific research in Italy. This has left open a space in the market and allowed an array of innovators to develop new and exciting products.

Omnidermal Biomedics has conceived and created a device based on artificial intelligence for the monitoring and classification of skin ulcers by analysing photographs acquired with dedicated electronics: the WoundViewer. The device allows doctors and healthcare professionals to monitor the healing progress of a skin ulcer and to intervene promptly if it deteriorates.

EmoLED, have developed a medical device for Photobiomodulation with blue LED light for the management of chronic wounds of various aetiologies. This is available now. When applied weekly the device claims to reduce healing time, inflammation and pain. Blue Light is claimed to stimulate tissue regeneration of the wound. The product concept is that the non-invasive approach will support and stimulate the physiological healing process of the wound.

Sterify is creating a 3D performance device derived from lactic acid bacteria and olive leaves to treat difficult to heal wounds and ulcers. The slow release of bacteriocins and polyphenols counteract bacteria colonisation and it also stimulates the fibroblast to produce the extracellular matrix thus speeding up healing time.

Our analysis showed that a surprising proportion (35%) of these new technologies did not have a direct technological competitor. Turnover varies greatly from between just €1,000 to €1million however only one company (Leonardino) claimed a turnover in excess of €500,000.

A dynamic and varied market landscape emerges from the data collected which if properly understood could ignite investor interest and lead to exciting partnerships although at present despite its excellent potential it has yet to reach a level of maturity in line with those of other European countries.