

PDT treatments to change the lives of acute burns patients

The management of scars from burns is difficult, and the results with standard treatments are often disappointing. The psychological distress for patients receiving them is also a real issue, making the development of a more successful treatment absolutely essential.

The other dimension for burns patients is that an open wound of any size is an obvious target for infection. As has been demonstrated in other PDT trials, the reaction of the drug and light can also kill infections. As you will read, we have a separate trial on PDT and infections to conduct within this programme.

We've all heard of scar tissue following operations. When this harder, less flexible tissue is on the skin's surface, the impact for the patient can be really distressing. One very real risk is of the wound splitting open during even light exercise.

We believe that an early PDT procedure will reduce the risk of significant scar tissue developing.

Current treatments to alleviate the scar tissue problem often involves potentially risky surgery or painful multiple injections to improve the elasticity of the surface.

Our research plan is to see patients offered PDT as part of their initial treatment plan. It's been tried experimentally in the past with anecdotal evidence being highly impressive.

The plan is for the trial to treat 50 patients – 10 in each of five regional centres. We can easily measure the outcomes.

The successful use of PDT at an early stage should reduce the need for plastic surgery - an unpleasant experience for the patient, and costly for the NHS.