

***An international study to explore the challenges faced by the  
medical device industry in the development and reimbursement  
of compression therapy***

**Abstract ILF Conference**

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**Background:**

Lack of agreement over the international classification of compression therapy contributes to confusion over what measures are required to capture the patient- reported and cost-effective outcome of compression therapy for this heterogenous population. The medical device industry who manufactures compression have important insights into these issues that has not been previously explored. This knowledge could provide clarity for improving the development and use of outcome measures internationally and thus improve access and uptake of compression.

**Methods:** Eight medical device companies who produce compression therapy and have expertise in reimbursement took part in 11 individual semi-structured interviews to explore these issues. Data was analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

**Results:** Five superordinate categories emerged : no definition – status quo, an ageing population, an evidence-based health care, changing international markets and patients as consumers, these were underpinned by 13 themes: <sup>1)</sup> technical versus clinical descriptions of compression,<sup>2)</sup> generic compression,<sup>3)</sup> knowledge deficit throughout the system,<sup>4)</sup> lack of evidence,<sup>5)</sup> expanding health care pressures,<sup>6)</sup> increased patient complexity,<sup>7)</sup> health care systems,<sup>8)</sup> inequality in healthcare <sup>9)</sup> beliefs and myths about compression,<sup>10)</sup> lack of incentive for investment, <sup>11)</sup> reimbursement barriers, <sup>12)</sup> burden of patient cost, <sup>13)</sup> increased choice and direct purchase.

**Conclusions:**

Reliance on technical definitions of compression rather than clinical descriptions lead to inertia in the uptake of compression therapy in clinical practice and barriers to reimbursement. The medical device industry adopts national strategies for obtaining reimbursement as the requirements for each country differ so much. A range of outcome measures are urgently required.

