No disclosures
Introduction

- Sclerotherapy has been an accepted form of treatment for lower extremity varicosities for over 100 years.
- Millions of people have benefited from this relatively minimally invasive treatment.
- Because many times it is the last treatment needed in a course of therapy, or it may be done on very small veins, it is easy to overlook that sclerotherapy is a procedure.
- Like all procedures, patient need to be informed of the benefits and risks of the procedure.
Introduction

- Patients also need to be educated about the treatment and certain aspects of after care before starting the process.
- As providers of this treatment, we are responsible for this education our patients require and deserve.
- We will review the pre-procedure patient preparation for sclerotherapy treatment, as well as post-procedure instructions, which include:
  - Informed consent
  - Procedure preparation and expectations
  - Post-procedure care
Informed Consent

- Sclerotherapy is a procedure that requires informed consent
- This consent should be in writing with the patient’s signature and your signature affixed and the signatures should be dated
- Each treatment should have its own signed informed consent
- The consent includes:
  - Risks of the procedure
  - Potential complications of not undergoing treatment
  - Alternative treatments to sclerotherapy
  - Other information you deem important to your practice
Informed Consent

- Potential risks of sclerotherapy:
  - Hyperpigmentation
  - Itching
  - Telangiectatic matting
  - Local skin ulceration
  - Ankle swelling
  - Allergic reaction
  - Pain
  - Superficial thrombophlebitis
  - Deep vein thrombosis
Informed Consent

- Potential complications of not undergoing therapy
  - Enlargement of existing varicosities
  - Increase in the existing number of varicosities
  - Spontaneous superficial phlebitis
  - Bleeding varicosity
  - If underlying SVI is present, ankle swelling and skin changes may occur
Informed Consent

- Alternative treatments
  - Treatment is not mandatory – condition is not life threatening unless varicosity under pressure bleeds
  - Graduated compression stockings
  - Cutaneous laser therapy on small red veins
  - Ambulatory phlebectomy if veins are appropriate size
Informed Consent

“Disclaimers”

- Treatment may not relieve all symptoms
- Medicine is not an exact science
- Sclerotherapy is performed in stages – may need several treatments
Procedure Preparation

- Before the first treatment, take time to sit down and go over the whole treatment process.
- This is time well spent – patients need to know the process.
- You may have covered this information during your initial encounter with the patient, but it is important to review it.
- Enforce the team approach to treatment.
- Review your responsibilities as care provider and their responsibilities during the healing process.
- No surprises for the patient post procedure.
- Increases patient satisfaction.
Procedure Preparation

Set Realistic Expectations!
Procedure Preparation

“Sclerotherapy works, but . . .”
Procedure Preparation

- It is not an instant fix
- It can take 2-3 months for the veins to scar down and disappear, sometimes longer
- Veins will look worse before they look better
- The patient must be committed to participate in the healing process
Procedural Preparation

- Review patient’s expectations
  - Identify veins that the patient wants treated
  - Time line
  - Number of treatments
  - Procedural expectations
  - Post procedural plans
- Confirm with patient whether you can meet these expectations
Procedural Preparation

- Review medical history
- Review previous vein treatments
- Allergies
Procedure Preparation

- Sclerosant
  - Recommended solution
  - Dosing limitations for each treatment
  - Dilution/concentration
  - Burning sensation may occur during injection – like a bee sting
  - Creates inflammation
  - Very small needles used for injection
  - Some veins may need to be reinjected with higher concentration of solution
Procedural Preparation

- Trapped blood
  - Occurs because blood may get trapped in vein after injection as it shuts down
  - Expected side effect
  - Veins will look worse because of trapped blood
  - Dark blue/light brown color
  - Tenderness
  - Risk of skin discoloration
  - Microthrombectomies
Procedural Preparation

- Medical grade compression stockings
  - Does patient have stocking at treatment session or willing to purchase from you – check before starting treatment!
  - Decrease amount of trapped blood
  - Keep solution in injected vein
  - Compression keeps the vein walls collapsed on themselves
Procedural Preparation

- Skin discoloration from sclerosant
  - Higher risk with darker skin pigment
  - First treatment – use dilute solution
  - Test injection
Procedural Preparation

- Post procedural activity
  - Some patients may have second thoughts after hearing restrictions
  - Exercise
  - Travel
    - Airplane
    - Long trips on land
    - Tanning
Procedural Preparation

- Answer all patient questions
- Emphasize your availability
  - Telephone
  - Office visits
- After your discussion, the patient may decide to postpone treatment
- That is okay – it is better to postpone treatment than to have an unhappy patient who was not prepared for the treatment process
Procedural Preparation

- Once patient agrees to proceed, focus on treatment
- Comfortable positioning
- Does the patient want to watch
- Is the patient needle phobic
- Offer patient a calm environment
  - Quiet
  - Conversation
  - Reading material
  - Music – IPod
Post-Procedure Instruction

- Provide post-procedure instructions in writing
- Review the instructions with the patient after treatment
- You may have reviewed them pre-procedure and while injecting – reinforcing them post procedure helps the patient who may have been anxious pre-procedure
- Give the patient time to ask questions – don’t rush
- We are giving the patient a lot of information – ask them if all of their questions are answered
Post-Procedure Instruction

- Post procedure instructions should include:
  - The procedure performed
  - Compression
  - Exercise/Activity
  - The possibility of trapped blood occurring
  - Discomfort medication
  - Symptoms requiring a phone call to the office
  - Office phone number and on call phone number
  - Reinforce that any concern or question warrants a phone call
Post-Procedure Instruction

- Your caring attitude is a comfort post-procedure and gets the healing process off to a good start
- The patient will have a positive experience that will encourage participation in the healing process
Conclusion

- Before sclerotherapy treatment, it is important to educate the patient about the process and to set expectations
  - Signed informed consent
  - Discussion covering the important aspects of the process
- Post treatment instruction reinforces care and expectations
- Your combined commitment to the treatment process enhances success of their treatment
- Success = a happy and satisfied patient
- And you will be happy, too!