



FAT DISORDERS
RESOURCE SOCIETY

Compression for Lipedema:

Compression Therapy is poorly understood and poorly implemented in the treatment of lipedema

By: Dr. Thomas Wright

Lipedema.net 

DISCLOSURES

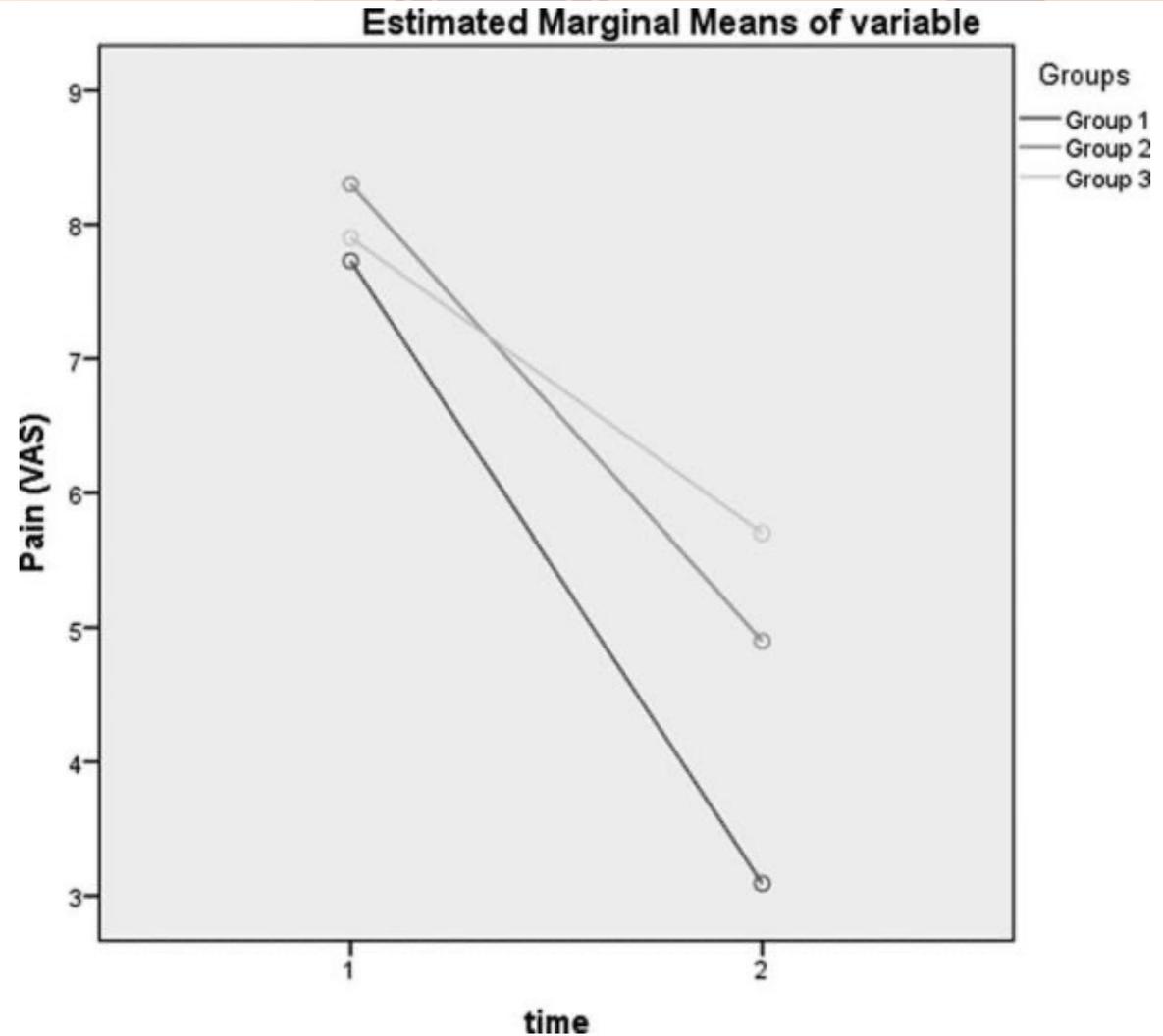
Dr. Wright has had research support and is a paid speaker for Tactile Medical.

Benefits of Compression Therapy in Lipedema

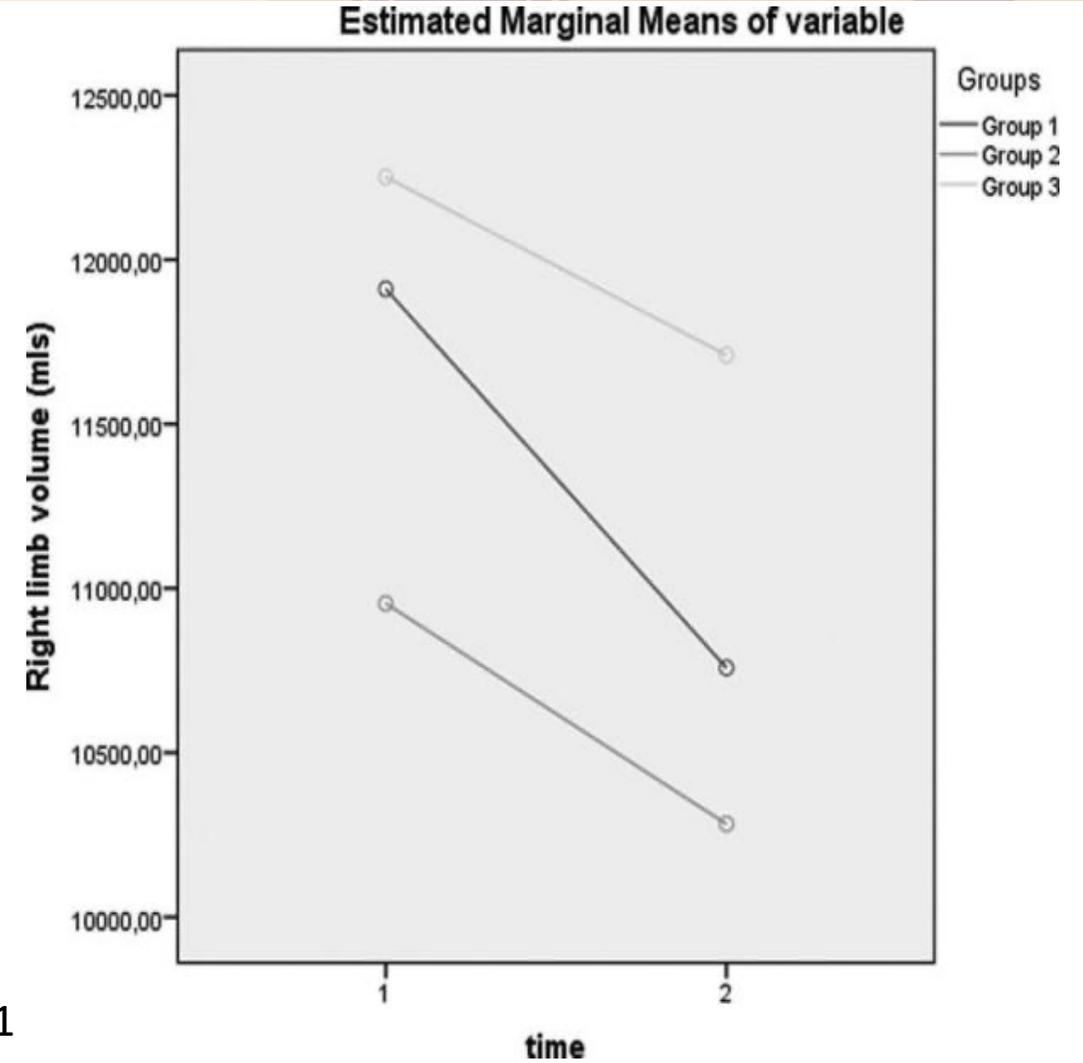
- 1. Helps smooth lobules and cuffs**
- 2. Improves mobility**
- 3. Decreases pain**
- 4. Garments have anti-inflammatory properties**
- 5. Compression decreases edema leading to decrease limb size**
- 6. Improves venous and lymphatic function leading to improved waste clearance and skin health**
- 7. Helps maintain benefits after MLD, pumps, or surgery.**

Pain measured by visual analog scale

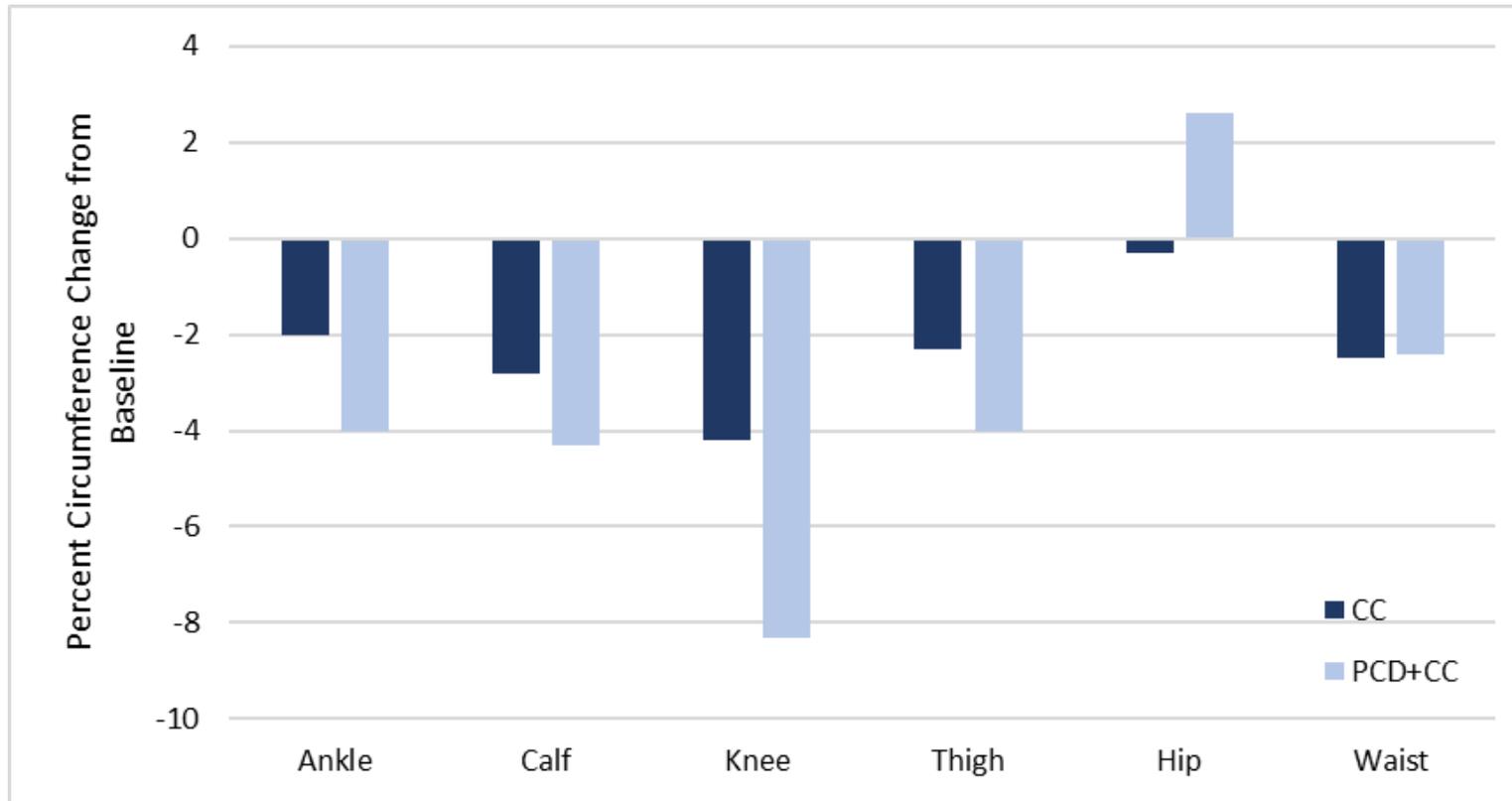
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Leg size by exercise & compression treatments



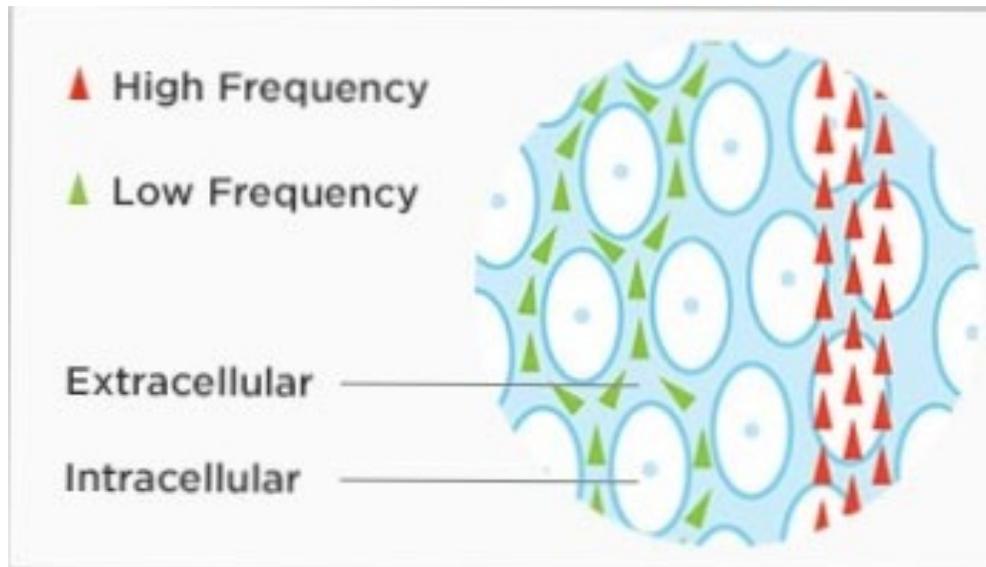
Change in Circumference Measurements (cm)



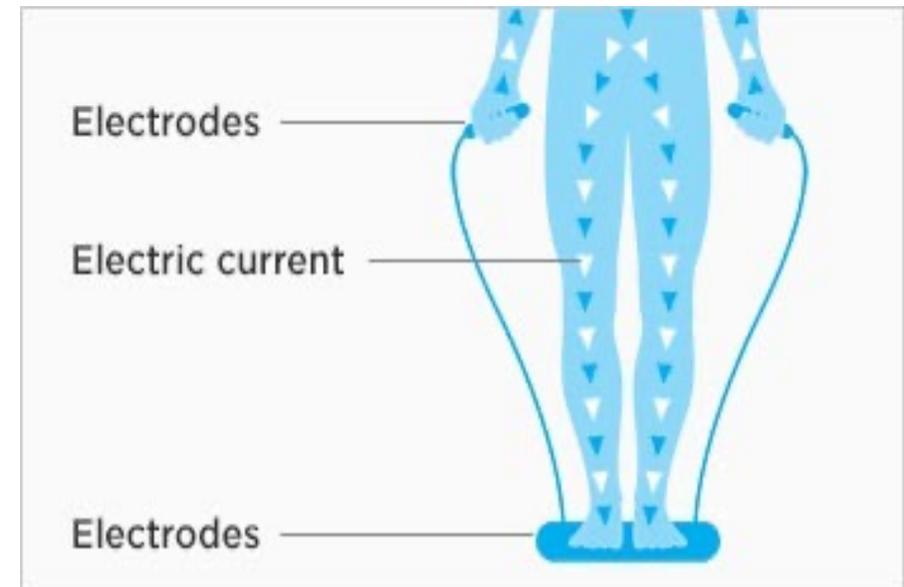
CC – conservative care with compression garments

PCD + CC – pneumatic compression device with conservative care -T Wright et al.

Bioimpedance Tissue Analysis



Low frequency current travels around cells
High frequency current travels through cells



The currents are added and subtracted to determine tissue content of segments

Change in Bioimpedance ECW/TBW with Compression in Lipedema

Baseline		0.392 ± 0.013	
Follow-up Change 0.007		0.389 ± 0.012 [Δ 0.007]	

Zhang. ECW/TBW healthy limb compared to limb with lymphedema (difference=0.008). 2020

Extracellular Water [ECW]

- **ECW is composed of Plasma + Interstitial Water + Lymph**
- **Plasma Volume is tightly regulated and does not change**
- **Change in ECW = Interstitial and lymph changes**

Interstitial Edema in Lipedema

- **Evidence of Interstitial Edema and Lymphatic Stasis in Lipedema puts Lipedema and Lymphedema on a continuum of Lymphatic Function.**
- **Yet only 70% of Lipedema Patients Regularly Wear Compression ***

***Survey of Lipedema Compression Use. Lisa Macintyre. 2020 Br J Community Nursing**

Lipedema Patient Reported Reasons for Compression

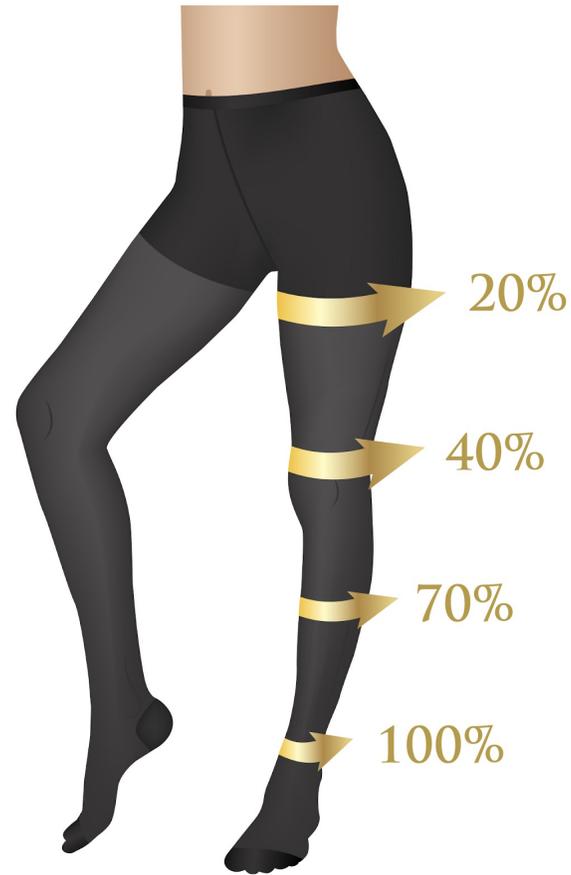
- **The top 3 reasons for wearing compression garments were:**
- **Feel supported (73%)**
- **Reduced pain (67%)**
- **Improved mobility (54%)**

***Survey of Lipedema Compression Use. Lisa Macintyre. 2020 Br J Community Nursing**

It Takes Work to Get Compression to Work

- **Proper Fitting – unique shapes/combination**
- **Proper Material and Strength**
- **Proper Donning**
- **Work in period (1-3) sessions of manual work to reduce discomfort/pain to tolerate compression**

Medical Grade Graduated Compression 20-30 mmHg



Types of Compression

- **Circular Knit - least expensive**
- **Flat Knit -best with cuffs and lobules**
- **Weaves- comfortable but often not medical grade**
- **Velcro Appliances- expensive and need adjustments**

Lymphedema Treatment Act

- **Passed in December 2022 goes into effect in 2024.**
- **Patient must have a diagnosis of Lymphedema, Acquired (I89.0) or Congenital (Q82.0).**
- **Hope for Improved coverage of compression garments prescribed by physicians. Is only for Medicare. We do not know if it will have any affect on lymphedema surgery.**

Thank You!!!

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FDRS 2023
April 14-16

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Atlanta, GA

www.fatdisorders.org/events