

The key to saving diabetic feet

Reducing the number of diabetes-related amputations through appropriate foot care service is the main aim of a new study funded by the Australian Podiatry Education and Research Foundation (APERF).

The research, led by Mr Craig Payne from the Department of Podiatry in Human Biosciences at La Trobe University, is expected to demonstrate the importance of diabetic patients obtaining specialised foot care, before it's too late.

In Australia, ulceration of the feet effects up to 10% of those with diabetes each year, with as many as 2600 amputations performed annually, costing between \$48-\$53 million in hospital management and up to \$330 million overall in community costs.

“By comparing regional rates of amputation with the number of patients seeking expert foot care before their operation, we hope to show that preventative check-ups are the key to saving feet,” Payne said.

Recent studies indicate that only a third of diabetes patients requiring amputation has seen a specialist diabetes physician, with even less receiving podiatry care.

The data obtained by Payne will also be



Craig Payne (left) begins his research.

used to calculate future trends in diabetes-related lower extremity amputations if there is no change in the current level of services. One study suggests that there be 0.5 full-time equivalent Podiatrist to meet the need in the diabetes population for every 100,000 total population.

Payne believes it is extremely important to investigate this relationship and provide figures to illustrate the role specialist care plays in the prevention of such a costly, and at times, avoidable operation.

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APERF Call for Applications

Deadline: 31st October 1999
APERF grants of between \$2,000 and \$4,000 are available to all people involved in foot and related research. However, weighting will be given to applications whose team includes podiatric representation, particularly as the primary applicant. For application forms contact the
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