

New Research Grants Awarded

An investigation into work-related foot and lower limb discomfort, examining the risk factors for foot problems in the workplace, is just one of the studies to receive funding in the latest round of APERF (Australian Podiatry Education and Research Fund) grants.

The study by Lloyd Reed, Beth Newman and Diana Battistutta of Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is likely to contribute significantly to the area of workplace foot health, where not a great deal of research exists.

In another APERF-funded study a computer-based diabetes self-management tool, targeting patients of diabetic foot complications, will be trialled by a group of QUT researchers led by Professor Paul Bennett and Megan Bauer.



Lloyd Reed - investigating work-related foot and lower limb discomfort

Little is known about the biomechanics and pathology of the pes cavus foot type or the efficacy of treatment options such as foot orthoses.

As the National Diabetes Strategy calls for a 50% reduction in lower limb amputations by 2005 and studies continue to show that high numbers of people with diabetes fail to get their feet checked, tools such as these play a vital role in improving community health. To expand its applications the tool will be adapted for use by podiatrists in clinical settings as well.

Two studies of orthoses complete the grant round. Craig Payne and Anthony Schuache of Melbourne's La Trobe University will evaluate the effectiveness of orthoses: foot orthoses are used to try and correct rearfoot alignment; however, kinematic studies have generally shown little or no change in the function of the foot. The aim of this study is to determine the kinematic response of the foot to foot orthotics and compare this to the force needed to supinate the foot. It is hypothesised, that if the force is lower, the kinematic response will be greater.



Joshua Burns - APERF funding will support his Randomised Controlled Trial

In the other orthoses study, Joshua Burns, Jack Crosbie, Robert Ouvrier and Adrienne Hunt of the University of Sydney will examine the effectiveness of custom foot orthoses on foot pain and plantar pressures in painful pes cavus.

Little is known about the biomechanics and pathology of the pes cavus foot type or the efficacy of treatment options such as foot orthoses. Custom foot orthoses will be evaluated using in-shoe pressure analysis and a quality of life questionnaire related to foot health. Through orthotic intervention, the association between excessive pressure under the pes cavus foot and commonly reported symptoms will be investigated.

Congratulations to all the APERF recipients.

Support Podiatry Research Now

The Australian Podiatry Education and Research Foundation (APERF) was established in 1990 to advance research into the causes, prevention and treatment of foot problems. With the help of generous donations from the podiatry community – podiatrists, industry and grateful patients – APERF now provides support for, on average, 3-4 projects each year.

This investment is resulting in rewards for the profession, including advances in clinical care and world-recognized research which has been published in international medical publications, in the Australian media as well as being presented to the profession at large at the biennial podiatry conferences. For example, nine of the presenters at the 20th Australasian Podiatry Conference in 2003 were previous APERF recipients.

In order for APERF to continue to fund high quality research projects, the ongoing support of the profession is required. With the end of the financial year only a few months away, now is the ideal time to make a tax deductible donation that will support not just research but evidence based practice.

To make a donation or find out more about grant criteria or funded projects, please contact the APERF trustees on 03 9416 3111 or visit www.apodc.com.au/apodclaperf.htm