

Member Shares Insights on Research Related to Diabetic Foot & Ankle Conditions



Katherine E. Dux, DPM, FACFAS

As the number of people living with diabetes continues to rise each year in the United States, so does the rate of diabetes-related foot and ankle conditions among the patient population. This means foot and ankle surgeons must not only stay on the cutting edge of new treatment approaches and surgical techniques, they must also pay close attention to research trends aimed at improving foot and ankle health for those living with diabetes.

Katherine E. Dux, DPM, FACFAS, of Loyola University Health System, treats many patients with diabetic foot and ankle conditions and is involved in new research focused on intraoperative glycemic control. “Specifically, my institution is following patients with diabetes to determine if an association exists between intraoperative glucose levels and patient outcomes after elective foot and ankle surgery,” says Dr. Dux.

She and the research team are collaborating with peripheral vascular surgeons on improving limb salvage in patients with complicated diabetes, critical limb ischemia and ulcerations, infections and gangrene. “Stay tuned for further guidelines and recommendations

on the care of this patient population,” she adds. While definitive data may not be available for another 12 to 24 months, the study opens up new opportunities to evaluate the impact of comorbid conditions in patients with diabetes and how they affect the feet and ankles.

Like many foot and ankle surgeons, Dr. Dux has seen an increase in diabetic foot conditions in her practice. “Patients with complicated diabetes, such as those with neuropathy, are demonstrating an increased risk for ulceration and reulceration,” she explains. “This is especially true in patients with concomitant deformity in the foot and ankle.”

She believes foot and ankle surgeons will continue to play a critical role in limb salvage and deformity correction as more and more people are diagnosed with diabetes each year, and she also sees areas that could benefit from additional research. “We need further information on appropriate surgical timing for definitive amputation procedures in patients with nonhealing wounds and/or gangrene who require revascularization procedures secondary to vascular disease,” Dr. Dux asserts.

In her opinion, research that explores the role of glycemic control during the preoperative, perioperative and postoperative period in elective foot and ankle surgery has the potential to make the greatest impact on patient care. The results of such research could help foot and ankle surgeons choose the best surgical intervention for patients with diabetes and better foresee any risks or complications following surgery.

Dr. Dux stresses that to achieve optimum long-term outcomes in these patients, the primary care team, endocrinologist, dietitian, vascular surgeon and foot and ankle surgeon must work together to provide preventive care. “These providers need to regularly educate patients on the potential risks and complications related to their diabetes,” she closes, “as well as the importance of strict glycemic control through diet and exercise.”

Visit the ACFAS Marketing Toolbox at [acfas.org/marketing](https://www.acfas.org/marketing) to download the free PowerPoint presentation *Dos & Don'ts of Diabetic Feet* and the free infographic *Dos & Don'ts for Diabetic Foot Care* and use them to educate your patients and community.

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