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NEW STUDY PRESENTED AT DFCON 09: DIABETIC FOOT PROBLEMS COST 60 TIMES MORE LEGS THAN ALL LANDMINE ACCIDENTS IN THE WORLD

Foot problems in diabetes cost 60 times more legs than all landmine accidents in the world, according to a new study by the University of Arizona College of Medicine and Jain Hospital in India presented at DFCon 09 Global Diabetic Foot Conference, held March 19-21 in Los Angeles.

“While there are more than 1,500 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) around the world dedicated to landmine eradication, none exist to stop diabetes-related amputations,” said David G. Armstrong, DPM, PhD, co-author of the study and co-chairman of DFCon. Dr. Armstrong is professor of surgery and director of the Southern Arizona Limb Salvage Alliance (SALSA) at the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Tucson.

Diabetic foot problems actually are worse than many cancers in terms of five-year survival rates, but our medical system doesn’t yet have the policies or procedures in place to make a difference, noted George Andros, MD, conference co-chairman. Dr. Andros is a vascular surgeon who is founding partner of Los Angeles Vascular Specialists.

The University of Arizona-Jain Hospital study was one of a number of major research efforts reported at DFCon 09. In its sixth year, attendance at DFCon reached a record more than 1,000, including about 450 podiatrists. About 40 international faculty members participated in the DFCon education program. More than 70 pharmaceutical and medical device companies exhibited at the conference.

“DFCon really has an impact because as the largest annual diabetic foot conference in the world it brings together DF specialists from 50 countries and all 50 U.S. states, all with the goal of reducing amputations,” said Dr. Armstrong.

At the conference, held at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel at the site of the Academy Awards®, Peter R. Cavanagh, PhD, DSc, professor at the University of Washington in Seattle, received the 2009 Edward James Olmos Award for Advocacy in Amputation Prevention.

Among other research studies and new medical developments presented at DFCon:

- Bacteria seem to be ganging up and joining forces to do battle with their human hosts. Bacterial colonies, known as biofilms, are now one of the biggest enemies to healing wounds. Data presented at DFCon described efforts to battle these invaders.

- New surgical procedures promise new hope in reconstructing limbs once too deformed from the ravages of infection and diabetes to survive.

- Inexpensive devices, such as bathroom mirrors and thermometers, can help patients identify limb-threatening problems at home before they ever start.

- New vascular surgical procedures presented at DFCon promise to open or bypass clogged arteries in cases that were considered too complex even a few years ago.

Presenting sponsor of DFCon 09 was Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, Calif.

The next DFCon meeting is set for March 18-20, 2010, again at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel in Los Angeles. Valley Presbyterian Hospital, Van Nuys, Calif., will be the presenting sponsor for 2010 and 2011.

DFCon is managed and produced by International Conference Management, a CPME-accredited corporation. For information on the conference, visit

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