

The inaugural meeting of Podiatry Diabetes UK (PDUK) was held at the Reebok Stadium, the home of Bolton Wanderers Football Club, on the 27th November 2003. The meeting was attended by more than 80 podiatrists involved in the provision of diabetic foot care. PDUK is a national specialist interest group that enjoys a strong foundation of support from a wide range of stakeholders involved in diabetes care, including the Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists, Diabetes UK and the Department of Health Changing Workforce Programme (DoH, 2001).

What is PDUK?

Development of the group is a response to the lack of nationally recognised training programmes for podiatrists who wish to provide specialist care as part of the multidisciplinary diabetic foot care team. The main focus of the group's activities will be to establish nationally recognised standards and competencies for those healthcare professionals who are providing, or wish to provide, quality diabetic foot care services. PDUK is also committed to providing a much needed support framework for those practitioners. To support such a framework, an email forum will be in operation by the summer of 2004 for PDUK members, using a SMARTGROUP web based facility. The PDUK mailing database will provide a communication forum to enable the exchange of information and opinion, peer support and the sharing of best practice in a flexible environment that clinicians can access at their own discretion.

Aims of PDUK

It is the intention of PDUK to identify standards of care that are appropriate for the modern NHS. This will involve the participation of various stakeholder groups to help identify the standards and will be informed by all current guidelines for management of

diabetic foot disease, e.g. NICE (2004), CREST (1998) and SIGN (2001). The development of a set of validated benchmark standards may act as a catalyst for institutions and professional organisations who wish to provide appropriate higher level training and education courses for healthcare professionals who specialise in diabetic foot care. PDUK have already been formally acknowledged as a stakeholder group to provide opinion and feedback to NICE regarding their guidelines.

Inaugural meeting

The inaugural meeting provided an opportunity for all participants to debate the routes of training and education that are required to meet the multiple challenges of providing effective clinical practice in the management of diabetic foot disease. A number of concerns were highlighted by members of PDUK regarding existing routes of attaining recognised levels of training and education. The most favoured route was the medical pupillage model. The ethos of this model was first proposed by Neil Baker (Co-Chair and research podiatrist). A pupillage approach would involve podiatrists and other healthcare professionals spending time in accredited clinical specialist placements in order to achieve specific clinical skills and competencies. These placements would, in all probability, be in nationally recognised diabetic foot care centres. Members of PDUK recognised that the academic component would have to be at a postgraduate level of study.

Other concerns were raised regarding funding and availability of competency based training programmes.

Alistair McInnes outlined the proposed Fellowship in Podiatric Medicine on behalf of the Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists. This route of training offers both clinical and academic components that includes a focus on diabetes as

well as other clinical specialities. The audience were not aware of this initiative from the society and were concerned that any future training and education opportunities focused on diabetes exclusively and not on other subject areas. PDUK are working with the Society to develop the Diabetes components of the Fellowship in Podiatric Medicine.

PDUK would like to thank Simon Breed of SB Communications, Publisher of the *Diabetic Foot* journal for his enthusiasm and support. Simon will enable PDUK to communicate with all its members via the *Diabetic Foot* journal and will support a PDUK meeting that will take place at the London *Diabetic Foot* journal conference on the 18–19th November 2004 at Le Meridien Russel Hotel in London.

Delegates at the inaugural meeting were asked to complete a questionnaire which sought opinions on the following: preferred accredited routes for diabetes specialist podiatrists; preferred conference venues for future PDUK presentations/workshops; preferred diabetes related subjects for workshops; and interest in the PDUK website/email forum.

PDUK would like to thank Johnson and Johnson for their sponsorship of the inaugural meeting. ■

CREST (1998) *Guidelines for the management of the diabetic foot. Recommendations for practice.* Clinical Resource Efficiency Support Team, Northern Ireland.

NICE (2004) *Type 2 diabetes: prevention and management of foot problems.* National Institute of Clinical Excellence, London

SIGN (2001) *Guideline 55 Section 7: management of diabetic foot disease.* Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network, Edinburgh

Written by Martin Fox, Secretary, Podiatry Diabetes UK