

Our time is now: A unique opportunity for you to engage in innovations, initiatives, and research into diabetic foot care



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The modern NHS is under increasing financial pressures. The requirements to maintain the core elements of practice to ensure optimal outcomes for our patients has rightly taken precedent in these times of austerity. The mottos we are hearing from organisations all contain statements such as “we must safely reduce costs” and “we must work smarter to optimise our capacities”. Unfortunately, these mantras have in some ways stifled new developments and innovations.

The political agenda – and our medical colleagues – clearly support the move towards evidence-based practice that is simultaneously patient-centred and clinically effective. Additionally, all allied healthcare practitioners are now required to provide evidence-based practice in supporting service developments in the NHS. Therefore, we need opportunities to be innovators, to test out initiatives, and engage in research but sadly, due to finite resources, these are often strangled at conception.

Innovations and the diabetic foot

The diabetic foot population continues to grow at an alarming rate due to changes in demographics and lifestyle choices. The need for new innovations specifically into diabetic foot aetiology and management is greater than ever. These may be exploring patient pathways, improving clinical education, service developments, patient empowerment programmes or research in the clinical environment. Yet, as we have already highlighted, securing any funding is becoming increasingly difficult.

Your role in research and innovation

Beyond the necessities of a stronger evidence base for our care, building your skill set as a clinician by actively engaging in leadership, innovation and research is an important professional step. The Podiatry Competency Framework for Integrated Diabetic Foot Care (TRIEPodD-UK, 2012) highlights that an advanced practitioner is one who not only has a good knowledge of current research in diabetic foot disease and facilitates

the integration of evidence-based practices in the clinical setting, but also participates in the design and implementation of research and audit activities.

The URGO Foundation Award

Fortunately for us, the URGO Foundation have themselves been innovative and recognised the challenges we are facing and aim to support us to provide some redress to this trend. The URGO Foundation is calling for clinicians to submit project proposals that will be focused around investigating the prevention and management of diabetic foot ulcers. The winning proposal – as decided by a jury of experts in diabetic foot care – will be awarded a grant of £20000 to carry out their project.

Submissions for the 2014 URGO Foundation grant are open until 30 June, with detailed instructions available at <http://bit.ly/1fpl2Rh>.

We strongly encourage you independently, or as part of a team, to submit a project proposal for this important and generous grant. There is also assistance available via the above website if you have any direct enquiries.

Conclusion

We are delighted by this unique opportunity and applaud the vision that the URGO Foundation has created with their decision to target the 2014 grant to the diabetic foot. This is your chance to implement that innovative idea you have had for a long time but unable to pursue due to financial or time restrictions.

It can be hoped that this substantial commitment will generate important evidence for future practice, provide research opportunities for clinicians in a field that is too often overlooked for such beneficence, and – most important of all – improve outcomes for people with, or at risk of, diabetic foot disease.

The community of clinicians who provide care for people with diabetes are a committed, motivated and enquiring lot. We confidently expect you, dear readers, to submit a wealth of exciting project proposals for the 2014 URGO Foundation Award. ■

TRIEPodD-UK (2012) *Podiatry Competency Framework for Integrated Diabetic Foot Care. A User's Guide*. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1dDOsfB> (accessed 18.03.2014)