



Michael Edmonds

The Fourth International Symposium on the Diabetic Foot held in Noordwijkerhout, Netherlands (May 22–24, 2003) was an outstanding success. It was the world's largest diabetic foot meeting and brought together podiatrists, nurses, orthotists, physicians and surgeons. In total, there were 700 participants from 58 countries.

The programme consisted of invited lectures by renowned experts in the field, three mini symposia, 48 oral abstracts selected from the 150 delivered abstracts, poster discussions and workshops.

The Diabetic Foot Award was presented to Ali Foster. The Award Committee judged Ali to be one of the most outstanding specialists in the field of the diabetic foot and her contribution to the development of knowledge in the diabetic foot as pivotal.

Invited lectures covered the latest results from basic research, policies in management, diagnostics and treatments, new data on the incidence of diabetic foot disease and the socioeconomics of the diabetic foot. All lectures of the invited speakers will be published as proceedings in a supplement of the journal *Diabetes/Metabolism, Research & Reviews*.

The three mini symposia addressed: 'Foot surgery', 'Infection in the diabetic foot' and 'Wound care in diabetes'. The symposia on foot surgery discussed the role of corrective surgery, Achilles tendon lengthening, and preoperative rehabilitation and assessment of the amputee-to-be. It concluded with a debate on offloading which confirmed its importance in the treatment of the neuropathic foot. There was an important seminar on infection of the diabetic foot which addressed the symptoms and signs of infection and osteomyelitis, and stressed the value of the multidisciplinary approach involving surgical, antibiotic and adjunctive therapies.

The wound care symposium considered the molecular

and cellular differences between acute and chronic non-healing wounds, the new topic of wound bed preparation, together with topical treatment, specialist wound clinics and how the effectiveness of management should be determined.

Forty-eight orals were presented in four parallel sessions on consecutive days, provoking lively discussion on infection, epidemiology, foot surgery and foot clinics on the first day, followed by wound care, education and psychology, vascular disease and podiatry and biomechanics on the second.

Poster discussions were held from 7.30 to 8.30 on consecutive mornings and encouraged more informal debate on these topics. The first poster prize was awarded to Sue J Barnett, J Cunningham and S West from the University of the West of England, UK, for the poster: 'The clinical effectiveness of orthoses prescribed to control and to reduce diabetic foot pathology'.

In the afternoons, seven concurrent workshops were well-attended. These focused on practical aspects of care of the diabetic foot, namely psychosocial factors and the foot at risk, diagnosis and treatment of neuropathy, surgery and the diabetic foot, footwear and offloading, classification of foot ulcers, detection and treatment of the foot at risk in diabetes by the podiatrist and peripheral vascular disease.

Everyone enjoyed the hospitality and quality of this exciting Fourth International Symposium on the Diabetic Foot. The quadrennial Noordwijkerhout diabetic foot conference is an important meeting for all those concerned with the care of diabetic foot and must be contributing to better standards of foot care. Many congratulations and thanks should go to Dr Karel Bakker and his organising committee who together with the International Scientific Advisory Board organised a truly fantastic and memorable meeting. ■

Michael Edmonds is a Consultant Physician at King's College Hospital.

Ali Foster – winner of the Diabetic Foot Award



Ali Foster receiving the award

Ali Foster, this year's winner of the International Diabetic Foot Award is Lead Clinical Specialist Podiatrist at King's College Hospital NHS Trust, where she works within a multidisciplinary team in the diabetic foot clinic.

She studied English Literature, Philosophy and Biology at the University of Lancaster and was awarded the Post-graduate Certificate in

Education from the University of Warwick and the Diploma in Podiatric Medicine from the University of Westminster (Chelsea School of Chiropody).

Ali holds the Meritorious Award of the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists 1997, the M. Viswanathan Gold Medal 1999 'in recognition of services to diabetes'. She was invited to 10 Downing Street by the Prime Minister and Mrs Blair in 2003, 'in recognition of the role of the Allied Healthcare Professions within the NHS'.

She sits on the editorial boards of *Practical Diabetes International*, the *Diabetic Foot* and the *Journal of Diabetes Nursing* and is Expert

Advisor to the *Journal of Wound Care* and *Podiatry Now*. Ali was elected onto the Chiropodists' Board 1996–98 and the Executive Committee of the EASD Post-graduate Study Group for the Diabetic Foot 1999–2001. She is a member of the International Consensus Group on the *Diabetic Foot*, and sits on the NICE Committee currently reviewing evidence-based management of diabetic foot complications. She has lectured both nationally and internationally and published widely. Ali's books include *Managing the Diabetic Foot*, and *A Practical Manual of Diabetic Foot Care* (in press).