
Preface

It has been more than four years now since Professor K. Satkunanantham encouraged me to develop a Diabetic Foot Team. The NUH Multi-Disciplinary team which includes an orthopaedic surgeon, an endocrinologist, an infectious disease specialist, podiatrists, nurses specialised for wound care, diabetes care and foot care, as well as other allied health professionals was launched in May 2003. In addition to the team, a Clinical Pathway for Diabetic Foot Problems (DFP) managed by NUH Case Manager was also implemented. The experience gained by members of the team has been tremendous and the quality service provided to our patients with DFP greatly improved. Indeed what started as a hospital drive to improve diabetic foot care in NUH has evolved into a national movement for improving the care of DFP in other hospitals in Singapore. It has also catalysed a regional movement for the care of DFP. The result was the organisation of the First National and Regional Conference on DFP, 20–21 November 2004 in Singapore with Dr. Nather as Organising Chairman, launched by our Minister of State for Health, Dr. Balaji Sadasivan. It was during this Conference that a National Association for DFP was formed in Singapore. The Conference also gave birth to the Asia Pacific Association for Diabetic Limb Problems with Dr. Nather as its Founding President. Since then, the Second Asia Pacific Conference was held in Malaysia (December 2005), the Third in Indonesia (November 2006) and the Fourth in Hong Kong (November 2007). The Fifth will be held 20–22 November 2008 in Singapore with Dr. Nather as Organising Chairman, and the Sixth in Beijing, China in 2009 with Dr. Xu Zhangrong as Organising Chairman.

The NUH Diabetic Foot Team also launched a Diabetic Foot Screening Course in March 2006 to train nurses, assistant nurses and technicians to conduct foot screening for patients with diabetes. There is an acute shortage of podiatrists in Singapore and in Hong Kong. In other countries in the region, podiatrists are not employed by the relevant health authorities. The only way to conduct foot screening is to train nurses and technicians to do this job normally performed by podiatrists. Foot screening of patients with diabetes are now conducted by nurses and technicians in three hospitals in Singapore. Such courses are now run annually by our foot team, attracting participation from neighbouring countries including Malaysia, Indonesia and Hong Kong. The First Course had 11 students including two occupational therapists from Malaysia. The Second Regional Course was ran in March 2007 and attracted 30 students including 12 from Malaysia, one from Indonesia and one from Hong Kong. The Third Course will be held in April 2008 and has registered 27 students to date.

During the First Regional Conference in Singapore in 2004, colleagues from Malaysia, Indonesia and Hong Kong have urged me to write a textbook on DFP. There is no textbook on this specialised field. Indeed there is now also a big demand for such a textbook to cover the curriculum of the foot screening courses that we run annually for nurses. Furthermore, undergraduate curriculum for medical students in all universities includes DFP — a national problem in all countries in this region. This book is written in response to such a call for a textbook. It is written mainly by experts from various disciplines in the NUH Multi-Disciplinary Team in Singapore, together with contributions from experts in the Hong Kong Diabetic Foot Team.

The textbook covers all aspects of DFP ranging from basic sciences (anatomy, biomechanics, pathogenesis, microbiology), assessment for neuropathy and vasculopathy, clinical examination of DFP, various clinical presentations of DFP, conservative management of DFP including prevention by foot screening, usefulness of team approach and implementation of a clinical pathway, the role of preventive and therapeutic diabetic footwear and surgery for DFP. It is specially written to cater to

the needs of medical undergraduates and of all doctors and allied health professionals committed to providing quality service for patients with DFP.

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