

THE FAST-TRACK PATHWAY FOR DIABETIC FOOT ULCERATION

All over the world the advent of specialist diabetic foot clinics have clearly demonstrated a year on year improvement in clinical outcomes for patients presenting with ulcerations.

Thus there has been the push to establish more multidisciplinary foot clinics or specialist foot centres. However, one big enemy that still persists, even in areas where these clinics exist, is late presentation or delayed referrals to the clinic. The factors contributing to these late presentations can be multifactorial, starting from patient's awareness, knowledge and awareness of the healthcare professionals, the degree of interlinking with the specialist centres.

However, one possible solution to the problem of late referral, is having a clear and simple pathway that is well known or understood by all healthcare professionals that come into contact with patients with diabetic foot ulceration.

The fast-track pathway for diabetic foot ulceration has been developed with close collaboration between senior members of the D-Foot team and the International Diabetes Foot Care Group (IDFCC), a group of Young Academicians from 5 countries across Europe working in the

field of diabetic foot care. The project also had an unrestricted grant from URGO Medical.

This fast-track pathway aims to help identify the most vulnerable patient by adopting a holistic approach in the patient's initial assessment, with co-morbidities and the clinical assessment of the ulcer. Patients can then be fast-tracked into three levels of care; (1) Severely complicated ulceration needing urgent hospitalisation. immediately, (2) Complicated ulceration needing referral to specialist foot care team within 4 days or (3) A non-complicated ulceration that can be monitored by the local healthcare professional, but fast-tracked up to specialist care promptly within 2 weeks, if there is failure to improve.

Ultimately we hope this fast-track pathway for diabetic foot ulceration can serve as a simple tool that can be adapted by all healthcare services to help streamline patients journey. Thus helping to address the problem of delayed diabetic foot referral to specialist foot care teams. severely complicated ulceration needing urgent hospitalisation,