

NEWS

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Third Annual Georgetown University Hospital Conference Marks Progress in Saving Diabetic Limbs *--Conference Attracts Record Attendance and Corporate Support--*

The third annual Georgetown University Hospital Conference on Diabetic Limb Salvage, A Group Approach, brought a record 1200 physicians and other medical specialists to Washington, DC, September 24-26, 2009, to learn about new ways to save limbs at risk of amputation due to complications of diabetes.

“Every 30 seconds a limb is lost due to diabetes, and this large conference focuses on the latest therapies and technologies to improve that terrible statistic,” said Christopher E. Attinger, MD, co-chair of the conference, held at the JW Marriott Pennsylvania Avenue Hotel in Washington. Dr. Attinger is division chief of the Wound Healing Center at Georgetown University Hospital.

At present, almost 100,000 limbs are amputated each year in the U.S. due to complications from diabetes, and worldwide the number may be close to a million annually. However, a multidisciplinary team approach to diabetic limb salvage, such as the one pioneered at Georgetown University Hospital over the past two decades can result in up to 97 percent of at-risk limbs being saved, according to John S. Steinberg, DPM, assistant professor and co-director of the Wound Healing Center at Georgetown.

The conference, presented by Georgetown University Hospital/MedStar Health, expanded this year with a below-the-knee vascular symposium and an administrative session on how hospitals can start their own wound and limb salvage center. The conference featured seven live surgical cases, lectures by more than 60 internationally known diabetic salvage experts, and interactive workshops and symposia.

Reflecting the growing worldwide interest in diabetes and diabetic limb salvage, the meeting set records for attendance and support.

“We had more than 1200 registered attendees from 47 U.S. states and 34 foreign countries, over 70 corporate exhibitors/supporters and what we believe is the best education program ever presented on the team approach to diabetic limb salvage,” said Richard F. Neville, MD,

conference co-chair. Dr. Neville is chief of the Division of Vascular Surgery and medical director of the Noninvasive Vascular Laboratory at Georgetown University Hospital.

The two conference hotels, the JW Marriott and The Willard, both sold out of rooms reserved for meeting delegates.

On September 25, the 2009 Georgetown Distinguished Achievement Award in Diabetic Limb Salvage was presented to Peter Sheehan, MD. Dr. Sheehan, president of Sheehan Health Management in New York, is an internationally known and respected diabetes researcher and educator.

David Broder, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist of the *Washington Post*, who is diabetic, spoke on September 24 on "The Patient's Perspective of Working and Living with Complications of Diabetes." The DLS conference also produced a short video, "Blessed with My Challenges," featuring actual patients who have overcome the challenges of diabetes and the risk of limb loss.

Also at the meeting, the leadership of two professional groups, the American Podiatric Medical Association and the Society for Vascular Surgery, continued to work on implementing a pioneering agreement on a multidisciplinary approach to treating critical limb ischemia. The groups are collaborating on practice guidelines and reporting standards in the care of the diabetic foot. They also are working together on joint postgraduate courses, publishing diabetic foot materials in the journals of the two groups and on public awareness programs.

According to Dr. Attinger, a limb salvage team should include a number of different specialists including a vascular surgeon, plastic surgeon, podiatrist, orthopedist, endocrinologist, internist, and nephrologist along with a nurse, nurse practitioner, physical therapist, pedorthetist, prosthetist and nutritionist. Other specialists may be brought in, as necessary.

The Georgetown DLS Conference itself exemplifies this team approach, as the conference co-chairs – Drs. Neville, Steinberg and Attinger – are respectively a vascular surgeon, podiatrist and plastic surgeon. The conference is multidisciplinary and delegates are from a variety of medical specialties.

Next year's conference is set for October 14-16, 2010, again at the JW Marriott Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC. For more information, visit the conference web site at www.DLSConference.com or contact Dennis A. Vitrella, conference director and president of International Conference Management, at dennis@DLSConference.com, telephone 337-235-6606.

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