

Geriatric Patient's Five Years of Foot Pain Cured in Single Office Visit

By Rich Cowin, DPM

For more than 40 years, the **Academy of Minimally Invasive Foot & Ankle Surgery (AMIFAS)**, previously The Academy of Ambulatory Foot & Ankle Surgery, has been teaching minimally invasive foot and ankle surgery (MIFAS) to doctors from all over the world. While courses in MIFAS had previously been limited to lecture rooms in hotels, the Academy's long time affiliation with LSU Medical School in New Orleans, a relationship that continues today, allows for podiatrists who attend AMIFAS conferences to receive not only superb didactic training, but also the opportunity to perform MIFAS procedures hands-on utilizing fresh cadaver specimens with experienced instructors in the LSU Medical School anatomy laboratory.

Because of the advanced instruction techniques now utilized by the AMIFAS, many doctors who attend these conferences find that they can return to their offices and begin introducing these advanced techniques immediately. A podiatrist who exemplifies this is **Vivian Iwu, DPM**, of Choice Podiatry Center in Georgia. Dr. Iwu is a 2004 graduate of the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine. After receiving her D.P.M. degree, she completed a PSR 36 residency in Pennsylvania. She then purchased a podiatry practice near Atlanta, GA, where she obtained hospital privileges and she performed all her foot surgery utilizing "traditional" techniques in the hospital... until this year.



Vivian Iwu, DPM

Throughout her four years of podiatry school and her three-year residency, as well as her attendance at many podiatry conferences during



her years of practice, she had never learned about MIFAS. When a friend of hers told her about a lecture that she had attended on MIFAS and shared her plans to attend her first AMIFAS meeting in New Orleans, Dr. Iwu decided to attend the conference with her.

Dr. Iwu and her friend attended the AMIFAS conference in February, 2019, at a New Orleans hotel and at LSU Medical School. "As soon as I was taught how to do

it, I KNEW I was going to be doing it," Dr. Iwu said. "It was like a light bulb went off for me as soon as I saw it," she added.

Before she left the meeting, Dr. Iwu purchased an Osada drill which she brought home with her from

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New Orleans. As soon as she got back to her office, she made arrangements for a wall to be knocked down there so she could have an in-office operatory. Then, she ordered a C-arm and the rest of her instruments and supplies. Whereas most doctors who return to their office following their first MIFAS meeting start off with some minor digital procedures, Dr. Iwu had in mind one of her patients who was an 85 year-old woman with bunions and hammertoes. "I had been treating her palliatively for five years and her foot pain kept getting worse," Dr. Iwu explained.

"Although her circulation was good and she was in good health, I just didn't feel comfortable opening up her foot," she said. "I told her about the minimally invasive procedures I had just learned and she said that she was in terrible pain, couldn't wear shoes anymore and wanted to be my first live MIFAS patient."

Dr. Iwu said that she felt that she was trained so well at the AMIFAS meeting that she felt confident doing a bunionectomy and hammer toe correction as her first procedures. She says that she has done more MIFAS cases since then with wonderful results and she describes her training and practicing of MIFAS as "a life changing experience."

The wife of a psychiatrist and the mother of four children, the very busy Dr. Iwu says that she has become a member of the AMIFAS and plans to attend many more of its meetings in the future. She says that she has also

Continued on page 140

AMIFAS *(continued)*

set a goal to become board certified in MIFAS by The American Board of Podiatric Medical Specialties.

For many years, leading podiatric and orthopedic surgeons from the U.S.A. and around the world have attended and taught at AMIFAS meetings. In fact, conferences on MIFAS have now taken place in every continent in the world save Antarctica. Many of these foreign-held conferences have focused exclusively on MIFAS techniques. Also, a number of AMIFAS board members and faculty members have traveled to teach these procedures in these many foreign countries. Some of the podiatrists and orthopedists from these countries have performed research projects, have written their own textbooks and have published journal articles on minimally invasive foot & ankle surgery. Further, several foreign orthopedic surgeons who learned MIFAS at AMIFAS conferences have authored Ph.D. theses on minimally invasive foot and ankle surgery.

Truly, for many years and now in 2019, there has been no better place than AMIFAS cadaver surgery seminars for podiatric and orthopedic surgeons alike to be trained in MIFAS. Visit www.aafas.org or [click here for more information](#).
