

“I’m Not Doing That! I’m a Doctor”

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I have heard that phrase too often. Many physicians believe that anything other than providing medical care to their patients is not what is in the best interest of their practice. They want to provide podiatric care and then refer those patients out for everything else.

In the more than quarter of a century that I have been in practice, I have seen the ups and downs of all things that podiatry has to offer. From the early days when reimbursement for surgical procedures was still good, to today when insurance companies make physicians jump

again. Whether it’s orthotics or anything else, I always talk to my patients about “investing in their foot health.”

From a business management approach, as the physician, you also must invest in the health of your practice. I learned a long time ago that anything that you do to improve your practice is an investment. Like anything else, you invest in something that you expect a return on.

In addition to capital equipment that I have invested in, I have invested in providing my patients with the option to purchase sandals or slippers that will continue to provide them with a degree of biomechanical control when not using their orthotics. The **Powerstep** Arch-Supporting sandal or slipper provides patients with biomechanical support



through hoops to provide the basic care that is needed to give the best care to their patients.

When I first started in private practice and knew nothing about business management, the only thing that I could worry about was providing that best care that I had been trained to provide. What I learned over the years is that providing the best care may include ancillary services that you never thought about. Not only are ancillary services a good clinical approach to the overall treatment of your patients, but also, when done properly, they provide a good return on investment to your practice.

Most of us will treat plantar fasciitis and other biomechanical problems with a pair of prefabricated or custom functional foot orthotics. While most of the time the orthotics in closed shoes will help to correct the problem and provide the patient with relief, what happens when they do not wear the orthotics? This is especially true in the summer months when patients, who have lived in closed shoes and sneakers for months, now start to live in sandals or the dreaded flip-flops.

One of the things that I tell my patients is that I do not want the orthotics sitting in the closet because they do not fit into the shoes the patient wears. That is just a waste of time and energy. In the summer months do they ditch those shoes in favor of sandals or flip-flops? If they do, now it’s time to think about what you can recommend to your patient to not have them start having pain

of the plantar fascia like the orthotics they may have in their shoes or sneakers. This is when they want support but cannot or will not wear the shoes that have their orthotics.

Here comes the time when doctors will say to me “I’m not a shoe store! I’m not selling that in my practice!”. The one question I would ask you is “why not?” Why not be able to provide your patients with another piece of the treatment puzzle? Think about it as investing in your practice and having the ability to improve your clinical outcomes.

For those of you reading this who practice in states where we are coming out of the winter where patients are going to stop wearing those closed shoes, this is a great answer. What about those of you who have patients who work at home due to COVID and are not wearing their shoes with their orthotics? Would not having the ability to dispense a pair of slippers with biomechanical control be something that you should consider for your treatment regimen?

One of the main points I want to focus on is clinical outcomes. Increased revenue will also follow. If you focus on the big picture and open your eyes to other opportunities, the rest is easy. If the message to the patient is “invest in your foot health”, then the patient looks at the purchase as an investment and not just a purchase. And one other thing: just having the display will most likely have the products sell themselves.

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