

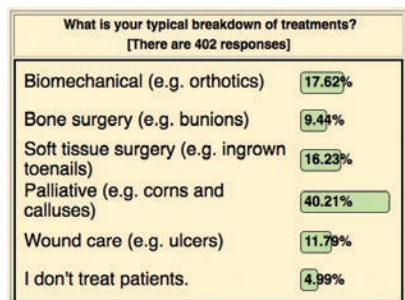
Podiatrists and Wound Care

BY **BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD**

Of all the types of treatments that podiatrists perform, perhaps the most challenging and often the most rewarding is wound care. The challenge arises because wounds on the lower extremity are usually the most difficult to heal. When you consider that the foot and ankle are the furthest anatomical structures from the heart, lack of vascularity (both arterial and venous insufficiency) is an initial concern. Add the resultant peripheral neuropathy, and the stresses of ambulation (often from ill-fitting footwear) to the mix and you have a near perfect storm to deal with. Infections and patient non-compliance or the presence of co-morbidities (diabetes, renal disease, obesity, etc.) completes this complicated picture.



Here's where the important role of the podiatrist comes in. We are often the first practitioners to diagnose and access pedal wounds. Our unique training and experience make us an essential part of the wound care health team, either as referrers or primary wound specialists. This is borne out by a recent study published in *JAMA* titled "Podiatric Care for



Diabetic Patients Associated with Reduced Risk of Major Amputation and Death." This is echoed by the recent *PM News* Quick Poll which now shows that more than one on ten podiatric treatments involve wound care.

This special issue of *Podiatry Management* is devoted to wound care. We encourage you to read the many topical articles written by some of the leading experts in the field. While not all wounds can be healed, the ones that we successfully treat can be both limb and life-saving for the patient and financially and professionally rewarding for us.

Respectfully Submitted,

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