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Diabetes leaves sugary trail of destruction starting at the toes

With Liverpool named the number one hot spot for Diabetes in NSW, it is fitting that health professionals from around the world will meet at Liverpool Hospital to attend the Sydney Diabetic Foot Conference on 16 and 17 April.

This event has become one of Australia's premier conferences on the specialist area of diabetes and the foot and will be hosted and partnered by Liverpool Hospital, South Western Sydney LHD and the Wound CRC.

Head of Liverpool Hospital's High Risk Foot Clinic, Mr Matthew Malone, said diabetes was a serious disease which could cause many complications.

"In Australia there are 3.6 million people with diabetes or pre-diabetes and more significantly, at a local level, Liverpool is ranked the number one diabetes hotspot in NSW," Mr Malone said.

"Recent research from the Australian Diabetes Council shows that seven of the ten suburbs with the highest rates of diabetes in NSW are located in Sydney's west," he said.

Whilst many people associate diabetes with the heart and kidneys, diabetes related foot disease and in particular diabetes related amputation is a significant problem. Last year it was estimated that 3,400 people with diabetes had amputations, or 65 people a day.

Mr Malone said the Sydney Diabetic Foot Conference at Liverpool Hospital provided a platform for the most current education and knowledge to Australian Health Care workers.

"The Conference is held every two years in order to improve education for both local and International health professionals and help fight the battle to prevent diabetes related amputation," Mr Malone said.

"It brings together a range of specialists involved in managing patients with diabetic foot disease, from podiatrists to endocrinologists.

"In addition to lectures, participants are given the opportunity to learn new skills and techniques in the state of the art Ingham Institute Skills and Simulation Centre at Liverpool Hospital.

"The conference not only provides an opportunity for learning and networking, but showcases Liverpool Hospital as a centre for clinical excellence," he said.

Over the two days, participant will hear from some of the most renowned clinicians and researchers from overseas and within Australia. Speakers include Dr William Jeffcoate (UK) who established the Nottingham Foot Ulcer Trials Unit, Dr George Andros (US) who will speak about revascularisation and the importance of peripheral arterial disease in people with diabetes, Dr Sicco Bus (Netherlands), who will speak about the importance of offloading foot ulcers, and Professor Gregory Schultz (US) who will provide a molecular perspective about wounds.

More than 300 delegates are expected to attend the conference but those who are not able to travel to Sydney for the event can access the conference online via live streaming, with the ability to view sessions anytime following the conference.

Matthew Malone is a senior member of the Liverpool Diabetes Collaborative Research Unit, based at the Ingham Institute of Applied Medical Research at Liverpool Hospital. Mr Malone is a senior member of the Unit, which brings together doctors and other clinicians working across a variety of disciplines in diabetes care, including podiatry, vascular surgery, endocrinology and infectious diseases. The focus of the group is to investigate new methods to improve the treatment and care of patients with diabetes and its complications. Mr Malone's special research interest is how diabetes impacts on the foot and lower extremity amputation.