

Montreal Abstract IDF meeting 2009 **The Caribbean Step by Step Diabetic Foot Care Programme**

A unique collaboration of the International Diabetes Federation and Rotary Club of Ledbury

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Introduction

In the Caribbean Region the prevalence of diabetes and the incidence of diabetic lower extremity amputations (LEA's) are very high. Ignorance and lack of preventive measures are the main causes of the problem. The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the Rotary Club of Ledbury (RCL), working with other UK and Caribbean RC's will carry out foot care programmes across the Caribbean in order to reduce the number of amputations.

Aim

The programmes will be based on the Step by Step model, which aims at improving diabetes foot care in the developing world by providing education for people with diabetes and healthcare professionals in the prevention and treatment of diabetic foot problems.

Methods

In 2008, the International Diabetes Federation approved funding for a joint project between the RCL and the IDF Consultative Section on the Diabetic Foot. Led by RCL, matching funds have been raised by Rotary Clubs, Districts and the Rotary International Foundation. Further funding has been secured from the World Diabetes Foundation. Step by Step has been effective in improving diabetes foot care in a number of developing countries (eg. India, Tanzania, and Pakistan). It has set up practical training courses for teams of healthcare professionals (doctors and nurses or other paramedics) and provided them with special educational materials. Built into the project is a session to teach participants how to train other healthcare professionals. They are encouraged to disseminate information through training so that they cascade their acquired knowledge and skills to colleagues in their local settings. The courses are held over a two-year period. IDF and RCL carried out a survey to identify sites in the Caribbean where to hold the first phase of training courses. Five islands were selected: Barbados, St Lucia, St Maarten, St Kitts, and British Virgin Islands. Site visits to these islands were carried out, and the programme will start in 2009-2010. A local and international medical faculty will be responsible for the training courses. The project has received the support of the Ministry of Health, local patient associations and Rotarians on each island.

Outcome

The expected outcomes include sustainable improvements to foot care in the target countries; increased awareness of diabetes and its complications; and improved links between civil society and diabetes healthcare professionals. The most important outcome will be reduced amputations and improved quality of life for many people with diabetes in the Caribbean.

Summary

In 2009-11, IDF and RCL will implement a Step by Step programme in the Caribbean to create sustainable improvements in foot care so as to reduce LEA's and improve quality of life for many people living with diabetes in the Caribbean.