



# ROSALIND FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCE

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Life in Discovery*

For Immediate Release:

## **Scholl College’s CLEAR Research Unit Produces “Off-Loading” Video to Improve Diabetic Foot Ulcer Prevention and Healing**



The CLEAR unit at Scholl College has produced a new video to instruct viewers the medical benefits and reasons for diabetic patients of using “off-loading” footwear.

NORTH CHICAGO, IL – The Center for Lower Extremity and Ambulatory Research (CLEAR) at the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine has produced a DVD presentation that shows viewers the medical reasons and the benefits of using “off-loading” footwear.

The video is designed to increase patient adherence with off-loading footwear by educating persons about its necessity. Unfortunately, many of these patients have lost the “gift” of pain, and they can’t feel the further damage they are inflicting with unprotected steps. Research has shown that these patients only wear their off-loading footwear 28% of the time.

Dr. Wrobel, DPM, MS, Acting Director of CLEAR, first devised this educational tool several years ago. He then recruited CLEAR faculty, researchers and staff, including Stephanie Wu, DPM; Bijan Najafi, PhD; Ryan Crews, MS, Nancy Sloane-Rivera, MS, APN, NP-C, CWON; and Sarah Woodward, to produce the DVD project.

The CLEAR team at Scholl College of Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science studied the research findings of methods that had the largest impact in the healing of diabetic wounds. They discovered that the clinical experience of J.M. Malone, MD, 21 years ago had the best results in preventing subsequent amputation in diabetic patients with active foot ulcers or prior amputation. Patients were given

a slide presentation or printed materials regarding daily foot care. The slide show group demonstrated a three-fold reduction in lower limb amputations over an 18 month period.

“In the spirit of Dr. Malone’s work, we wanted to create a visually interactive video that would leave a measurable lasting impact on our patients to wear their off-loading device correctly,” said Dr. Wrobel.

The new eight-minute DVD produced by CLEAR, “A Patient’s Guide to Understanding Treatment for Diabetic Foot Ulcers,” shows how every unprotected step taken – even a single nighttime trip from the bed to the bathroom – is the equivalent of a day’s worth of healing lost; whereas, the patient who uses an off-loading footwear device will improve wound healing, limiting the physical trauma to his or her limb.

The new video program is a convenient patient teaching tool that can readily and easily be implemented into standard care practices in most clinic settings. In its first part the video presents an amputee patient who walks with and without prosthesis, including information on the impact of amputation on patients’ lifestyle, including gait inefficiencies, cardiac decompensation, blood sugar control and other medical issues.

The video uses CLEAR’s state of the art gait lab to reinforce educational content. For example, one scene displays a split screen with a close-up of a patient’s foot taken under a “glass floor” that visually depicts the plantar surface of the foot while walking and its pressure profile of the associated stress as recorded via a pedography platform.

In the second part, the benefits of offloading devices and ambulatory aids are demonstrated. The importance of off-loading relative to various advanced wound-healing products is shown with a number of animated figures. Additionally, the reduced sensitivity to pain associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy and the subsequently necessary adjustments to lifestyles are presented.

In its conclusion, the DVD reinforces to the viewer the general concepts of pressure to the feet in daily walking, wound cycles and the key differences in using an offloading device to temper foot pressures and alleviate ulcers and wounds.

“The failure to wear appropriate footwear is one of the single greatest reasons diabetic foot ulcers do not heal, and the longer they remain open, the greater risk of infection and subsequent amputation of the limb,” said Ryan Crews, MS, CLEAR Clinical Research Scientist and Operations Manager. “This video dramatically imparts the importance of off-loading footwear in a format that is understandable to patients and their family members.”

The video program was produced by CLEAR with an unrestricted educational grant from Össur, a leading global company which manufactures and markets non-invasive orthopedics.

“A Patient’s Guide to Understanding Treatment for Diabetic Foot Ulcers” can be previewed in low resolution for a limited time on the CLEAR website at [www.CLEAR-Scholl.org](http://www.CLEAR-Scholl.org) in both English and Spanish versions.

The DVD can be purchased through CLEAR for \$50.00 and is intended for podiatric clinics, health systems and educational organizations. For more information, contact Sarah Woodward in CLEAR at the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine at 847-578-8420 or email [sarah.woodward@rosalindfranklin.edu](mailto:sarah.woodward@rosalindfranklin.edu).

***About Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science***

*Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science is a national leader in interprofessional medical and healthcare education, comprising the Chicago Medical School, College of Health Professions, Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine and School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.*

*There are more than 16,000 RFUMS degreed graduates in the United States and worldwide.*