

Industry Profile - Julie Miller



Julie Miller is the Manager of Podiatry Services at Austin Health and has worked at the Organisation for 15 years (including 9 years providing clinical Podiatry to patients of Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre). Julie is currently pursuing postgraduate studies in Wound Care at Monash University.

What does your service involve?

The service we offer is specific for people who have limb-threatening foot complications and minor or major limb amputation (toe, partial foot or higher). We offer an integrated high-risk-foot service with medical, surgical and allied health units, as well as inpatient to outpatient follow up.

What special treatment is required for patients who have had an amputation?

Amputation may be the result of trauma but is more commonly due to poor blood supply or infection. These patients require careful management (in terms of general foot care, wound care, orthotic support in some cases, and attention to footwear issues) to prevent further complications.

How often should we visit a podiatrist?

Service should be based on clinical need. Where a wound is present, weekly or fortnightly visits may be necessary. If there are no wounds, lesions or footwear issues, visits will be less frequent. We try to accommodate patients according to their clinical need as this can prevent hospital admission. Communication with other health care providers is an absolute priority.

What are the rewarding aspects of your profession?

I feel a great sense of satisfaction in helping patients achieve and maintain an “ulcer-free” state. Foot ulcers can be very debilitating. Also, it thrills me to see patients regain control of their life post limb amputation.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

The fact that the foot is the weight bearing part of the body, and despite surgery, ulceration, amputation and many other factors, patients still need to walk (or try to!). This is our greatest challenge - to allow patients to walk whilst protecting their wounded foot (feet).

Is there a particular memory/event in your career that stands out?

A career highlight was attending the “Malvern Diabetic Foot” conference in the UK in 2006 where some of the world leaders in the research and management of the Diabetes Foot were gathered. I was inspired in their company. Another exciting “event-in-progress” is the pursuit of formal recognition (by the public, by colleagues and by government) of ‘Advanced Practicing Podiatrists- High Risk Foot’. I am involved with the development of this proposal as Chairperson of the Melbourne High Risk Foot Clinics Collaboration.



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