

# NEWS

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## **NO RECESSION IN DIABETIC FOOT CARE: DFCON 09 MARKS RECORD ATTENDANCE AND SUPPORT**

There's no recession in diabetic foot care, if attendance and corporate support at DFCon 09 Global Diabetic Foot Conference are any indicators.

The sixth DFCon meeting, held March 19-21, 2009, in Los Angeles, attracted a record of more than 1,000 physicians and other clinicians, researchers, scientists and limb salvage experts from all 50 U.S. states and more than 42 foreign countries to hear 40 international faculty discuss the latest developments in diabetic foot research and care. Corporate support also set a record, with more than 70 pharmaceutical and medical device exhibitors.

“DF Con, the largest annual diabetic foot meeting, is unique because it brings together people from all over the world with the goal of reducing amputations,” said David G. Armstrong, DPM, PhD, co-chairman of DFCon. Dr. Armstrong is professor of surgery and director of the Southern Arizona Limb Salvage Alliance (SALSA) at the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Tucson, Ariz.

One of the factors behind the growth of the DFCon meeting is the disturbing statistic that every 30 seconds a limb is lost to diabetes, noted George Andros, MD, co-chair of DFCon. Dr. Andros is a vascular surgeon who is founding partner of Los Angeles Vascular Specialists.

More than 170 million people worldwide have diabetes, and that figure is expected to at least double by 2030, according to the World Health Organization. Around 3.2 million deaths every year are attributable to complications of diabetes – that's six deaths every minute.

Foot problems in diabetes cost 60 times more legs than all landmine accidents in the world, according to a new study by the University of Arizona College of Medicine and Jain Hospital in India presented at DFCon 09.

“While there are more than 1,500 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) around the world dedicated to landmine eradication, none exist to stop diabetes-related amputations,” said Dr. Armstrong, who co-authored the study.

Diabetic foot problems actually are worse than many cancers in terms of five-year survival rates, but our medical system doesn’t yet have the policies or procedures in place to make a difference, according to DFCon organizers.

At the conference, held at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel at the site of the Academy Awards®, Peter R. Cavanagh, PhD, DSc, professor at the University of Washington in Seattle, received the 2009 Edward James Olmos Award for Advocacy in Amputation Prevention.

Also discussed at the conference were plans for a novel collaboration between vascular specialists and foot specialists to prevent limb amputations. Representatives of the Society for Vascular Surgery and the American Podiatric Medical Association attended a pre-conference meeting and spoke at the conference. Joseph L. Mills, MD, a vascular surgeon at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, and Dr. Armstrong coined the term the “Toe and Flow” team, suggesting that the “irreducible minimum” requirements for an amputation prevention service are a foot specialist and a vascular specialist.

A number of important research studies and new medical developments were presented at DFCon:

- Bacteria seem to be ganging up and joining forces to do battle with their human hosts. Bacterial colonies, known as biofilms, are now one of the biggest enemies to healing wounds. Data presented at DFCon described efforts to battle these invaders.

- New surgical procedures promise new hope in reconstructing limbs once too deformed from the ravages of infection and diabetes to survive.

- Inexpensive devices, such as bathroom mirrors and thermometers, can help diabetes patients identify limb-threatening problems at home before they ever start.
- New vascular surgical procedures presented at DFCon promise to open or bypass clogged arteries in cases that were considered too complex even a few years ago.
- New shoe insoles debuted at DFCon may eliminate blisters, which in diabetics can become serious, limb-threatening ulcers. This holds promise for people with diabetes and even for weekend sports warriors and high-performance athletes.

Presenting sponsor of DFCon 09 was Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, Calif.

The next DFCon meeting is set for March 18-20, 2010, again at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel in Los Angeles. Valley Presbyterian Hospital, Van Nuys, Calif., will be the presenting sponsor for 2010 and 2011.

DFCon is managed and produced by International Conference Management. For information on the conference, visit [www.DFCon.com](http://www.DFCon.com).

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