

NEWS

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Contact: Dennis A. Vitrella
DVitrella@DFCon.com

WORLDWIDE CONCERN ABOUT DIABETES AND LIMB LOSS DRIVES RECORD PARTICIPATION AT DFCON 2010 IN LOS ANGELES

The eighth DFCon Global Diabetic Foot Conference, held March 18-20, 2010, at the site of the Academy Awards® in Los Angeles, attracted record participation from across the United States and around the world.

More than 900 diabetic foot specialists from 31 countries attended DFCon at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel.

“With doctors and scientists from all over the globe, we addressed the soaring rates of lower limb amputations, and our 42 distinguished speakers from 10 different countries discussed advanced treatments to avoid such complications,” said Co-Chair George Andros, MD. Dr. Andros is a vascular surgeon who is medical director of the Amputation Prevention Center at Valley Presbyterian Hospital in Van Nuys, Calif., and founding partner of Los Angeles Vascular Specialists.

“The conference was a huge success in every way – in terms of participation, quality education and most of all in getting the word out about how to save limbs,” said Dr. Andros.

DFCon is considered the premier international, interdisciplinary diabetic foot conference in the world. The meeting has become the place for “true opinion leaders to share and discuss their experiences -- egos don’t get in the way, and everyone has a chance to have a say,” said Wayne Zefeldt, senior manager, professional affairs at KCI.

The conference was broadcast live worldwide on Portal Education, and video of the education sessions will be streamed on the DFCon website at www.DFCon.com.

Corporate interest was strong at the meeting, with 70 pharmaceutical and medical device exhibitors.

“Delegates at DFCon are ‘infected’ with the spirit of partnership, education and prevention, and many take back home an almost evangelical zeal to save limbs,” said David G. Armstrong, DPM, PhD, co-chair 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.

Warren S. Joseph, DPM, of Philadelphia, editor of the *Journal of the American Podiatric Medical Association*, received the 2010 Edward James Olmos Award for Advocacy in Amputation Prevention.

“Warren is a great communicator who has been able to distill complex concepts into readily digestible morsels that every doctor and nurse can digest. In that way, he has helped to save countless limbs throughout the USA and around the world,” said Dr. Armstrong. The award is named after the Academy Award-nominated actor, who presented it at a ceremony at the conference.

Even in a recession year, last year’s meeting saw a percentage increase in attendance in the double digits, and this year participation rose again. One of the factors behind the continued growth of the DFCon meeting is the statistic that every 30 seconds somewhere in the world a limb is lost to complications of diabetes, conference organizers said.

More than 24 million people in the U.S. and 285 million worldwide have diabetes. Of these, about 25 percent at some point will develop a leg or foot ulcer, with about one-half of these becoming infected, requiring hospitalization and the risk of amputation. Complications from diabetes result in 120,000 amputations each year in the U.S. alone, and hundreds of thousands of amputations around the world. Once an amputation occurs, the five-year mortality rate is near 50 percent, higher than any cancer death rate except lung cancer.

As disturbing as those statistics are, the positive news from DFCon is that using the latest therapies and techniques and a team approach to care up to 97 percent of these limbs can be saved.

One of the DFCon faculty members, Lee C. Rogers, DPM, said: "DFCon 2010 answered the call to action. The information presented here will help doctors around the world prevent diabetic amputations."

Presenting sponsor of DFCon 09 was Valley Presbyterian Hospital in Van Nuys, Calif.

The next DFCon meeting is set for March 24-26, 2011, again at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel in Los Angeles.

DFCon is managed and produced by International Conference Management. For information on the conference, visit www.DFCon.com.

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