



DECLARATION STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF DIABETIC FOOT SURGEONS ON COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic is significantly changing health systems worldwide, resulting in a major shift in the allocation of resources. As for other diseases (cancer, cardiovascular diseases), in diabetic foot limb salvage the risk of disrupting the best practices is quite high. We strongly support the evidence that a multidisciplinary approach can lead to a reduction of hospitalization, limb loss and death in the diabetic population.

The COVID-19 pandemic has and is creating enormous challenges with regards to resources, hospital access, and continuity of care for active complicated foot wounds. As a result of this crisis, an unintended consequence is that emergent procedures have been delayed with a high risk of limb or life loss.

Non-acute diabetic foot disease should be treated in outpatient clinic programs and follow up could be delayed using remote patient monitoring and telemedicine. Community providers (nurses, GPs, advanced practice providers) are essential resources, working in collaboration with the supervising specialists.

We strongly promote the creation of national and international networks for supporting patients, and all healthcare providers. This crisis has resulted in a tremendous burden for everyone involved in hospital operations. This includes doctors, nurses, first responders, maintenance and cleaning personnel and administrator staff who support those who directly care for patients. Sharing clinical pathways and experiences would be essential to maintain the standard of care for our patients. Urgent cases with severe limb or life-threatening infection or severe critical limb ischemia with rest pain and gangrene that require emergent surgery should be considered for immediate hospital access.

As Healthcare Professionals we are all involved in the front line in the fight against COVID-19 and we need to adequately protect ourselves and act responsibly and prudently in these times.