

### PCR 3

#### **How often does an ulcer have to reulcerate before considering surgery?**

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A 72 year old man with type 1 diabetes for 29 years, complicated by peripheral neuropathy, retinopathy and nephropathy (CKD 3) first presented to our multidisciplinary foot clinic in 1994 with an ulcer on his semi rigidus left hallux. This healed within two months and he was discharged back to community care with surgical shoes. He was referred back in September 1998 with callus and interdigital ulcers. He was still wearing the same shoes issued in 1994 which had worn well. The interdigital ulcers healed quickly. In February 2001, he presented with further foot ulcers. His shoes were falling apart. His ulcers healed and he was discharged from the clinic with new shoes. In January 2003 he presented again with a large left plantar ulcer which healed within two months. We saw him again in May 2004 with an infected ulcer on the 2<sup>nd</sup> metatarsal plantar aspect which failed to heal with conservative treatment and he agreed to have surgery. In November the ulcers had healed. Unfortunately, a month later he presented with a left Charcot foot. He had intravenous pamidronate and remained in cast for a total of nine months. Not surprisingly he was referred back to the foot clinic in April 2007. Despite regular community podiatry he yet again reulcerated over the left 1<sup>st</sup> metatarsal head area, caused by wearing his own trainers as he had sent his custom made shoes in for repair. He had a Scotch cast boot. Three months later the ulcer had almost healed and the possibility of surgical intervention was raised by the patient himself but he did not proceed with surgery and 9 months later he presented with exactly the same ulcer. On the day of his elective surgery he presented with cellulitis of his left foot and leg. He had gas gangrene and amputation of the left hallux was carried out. When last reviewed, the wound site was almost healed. Why, despite repeated education, does the patient continue to reulcerate? How often does an ulcer have to reulcerate before considering surgical intervention?