

'Treatment for diabetic foot costs more than for most cancers'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Treatment of diabetic foot can be more expensive than most cancers, said senior podiatric surgeon Dr David Armstrong, director, Southwestern Academic Limb Salvage Alliance (SALSA) at Keck School of Medicine. It can recur in more than 40% of people and reduce quality of life, he added.

Diabetes foot complications are common, complex, and costly to handle, said Dr Armstrong, who was in Chennai to deliver the 38th Prof. M Viswanathan Gold Medal Oration organised by MV Hospital for Diabetes. "It is common in every part of the world yet is widely ignored," he said. Every second someone develops a diabetic foot and half of those people develop infection and among them, 20% end up in the hospital, he said. "Every 20 seconds

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someone with diabetes undergoes an amputation somewhere in the world," he said.

Studies have shown that the treatment of diabetes extremities is more expensive than treatment of breast, colorectal, lung, prostate cancer or leukaemia. "People with cancer don't ignore treatment, but people with diabetic feet ignore them all the time. In most cases, the only treatment offered is amputation," he said.

The quality of life for people with diabetic foot ulcers is worse compared to people with recurrent breast cancer, he added. Studies have shown that a year af-

ter healing nearly 40% of patients have recurrent wounds. "Studies have pointed out that people in diabetic foot remission have up to nine times more risk for death than amputation," he said.

While it may not be possible to stop remission, severe remission can be stopped with simple follow-ups in doctor's clinics and AI-powered devices, he said. For instance, we can use activity trackers to reduce the risk of wounds.

Earlier, he launched the wound clinic training programme at the MV Hospital for diabetes to educate healthcare providers and help prevent complications due to Diabetic Foot Infections.