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**Foot and leg amputations associated with diabetes have increased in Ontario**

Amputations of legs and feet related to diabetes and poor circulation (peripheral artery disease) have increased over the last decade in Ontario, found a new study in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

“Our study shows that unlike heart disease or stroke [which have been declining], lower-extremity amputations related to diabetes and/or peripheral artery disease have recently increased,” says senior author Dr. Charles de Mestral, a vascular surgeon at St. Michael’s Hospital and an adjunct scientist at ICES, Toronto.

Foot ulcers are common in people with diabetes, affecting 2%–4% per year. About 20% of foot ulcers fail to heal and ultimately lead to amputation. Almost one-quarter of patients who have constant foot pain or gangrene from poor circulation are at risk of death or amputation within a year.

The study included 20 062 patients at least 40 years of age in Ontario who had diabetes or peripheral artery disease and underwent lower-limb amputations between 2005 and 2016. Almost two-thirds of those amputations (12,786 or 63.7%) were major (above ankle) amputations.

Between 2005 and 2010, the overall rate of amputations (major or minor) declined from 9.88 to as low as 8.62 per 100,000 individuals, but amputations increased between 2010 and 2016 to 10 per 100,000 individuals.

“There is a tremendous health, psychological, social and economic burden associated with limb loss,” says Dr. Mohamad A. Hussain, lead author of the study and a vascular surgery resident at the University of Toronto. “We need to focus on better screening for foot problems in people with diabetes and poor circulation as well as better coordinating the multidisciplinary care they need to prevent amputations.”

In a related commentary, Dr. Bruce Perkins, Leadership Sinai Centre for Diabetes, Toronto, Ontario, writes, “[i]t is urgent that we determine with certainty whether this resurgence is occurring in Canada, define its magnitude and understand its consequences.”

*“Population-based secular trends in lower-extremity amputation for diabetes and peripheral artery disease”* is published September 3, 2019.

**MEDIA NOTE: Please use the following public links after the embargo lift:**

**Research:** <http://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.190134>

**Commentary:** <http://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.191064>

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