

Is fear of injecting holding you back?

Injections are used throughout medical practice for many kinds of patient therapy as well as anaesthesia. Podiatrists have a legal right to use injection techniques in their practice but according to Podiatric Surgeon, Dr Haydar Ozcan, there are some that fear using the needle.

"Injection therapy is used for many purposes, including diagnostics and treatment, so it's a tool that everyone in medicine utilises on patients, yet some podiatrists are a little hesitant or even fearful," he said.

"I have had podiatrists send me patients requiring injection treatment because they are not confident of doing it themselves. I am happy to help but I feel strongly that podiatrists become confident enough to do this, saving their patient a special trip to see me or another podiatrist who can inject," he said.

Haydar is clearly passionate about helping podiatrists learn the correct injecting techniques and gain confidence so they can administer on a day-to-day basis – raising their personal skill level as well as the professions.

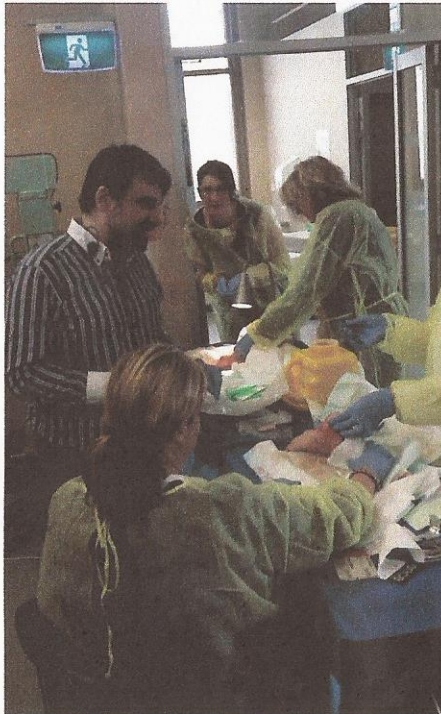
Haydar emphasised that as the injection has so many uses in podiatric practice, it should not be put aside through nervousness.

"Podiatrists can significantly expand their services by using injection, which can also help pinpoint where a patient's problem is. For example, if ankle pain is presented, an ultrasound may help locate inflammation, but by injecting anaesthetic into the foot to isolate the pain, a podiatrist can accurately pinpoint the actual pain source.

"Anaesthesia can also be used as a treatment on patients with forefoot, heel, joint and ankle pain, helping to block the pain cycle and improve vascular health. These are all positive impacts on the foot, so it's very important for a podiatrist to know how it works and how to inject correctly," he said.

When Haydar teaches injection techniques he is focussed on ensuring the podiatrist is confident about putting the needle in, so there is always a refresher on anatomy.

"There really is little risk about injecting into the foot so I instil this in those who come along to ensure they are confident about putting the needle into the region of the foot required. The main risk to watch out for is the maximum safe dose calculations and allergy state of our patients," said Haydar.



HAYDAR (LEFT) WITH STUDENTS WORKING ON REAL FEET

This is something he covers in the course in detail, but bearing in mind that no one lost a foot or life from over dose following foot injections in Australia.

In Haydar's courses real feet of cadavers are used, so the podiatrist can practice their techniques with the authentic feel of the needle entering the foot and where the fluid is going.

"It's a very positive experience to practice on a real foot and after I teach how to hold the needle properly, minimise damage to the injection site and where to put the needle in depending on the treatment, the majority leave with enough confidence to go into their practice and use their new skill immediately," he said.

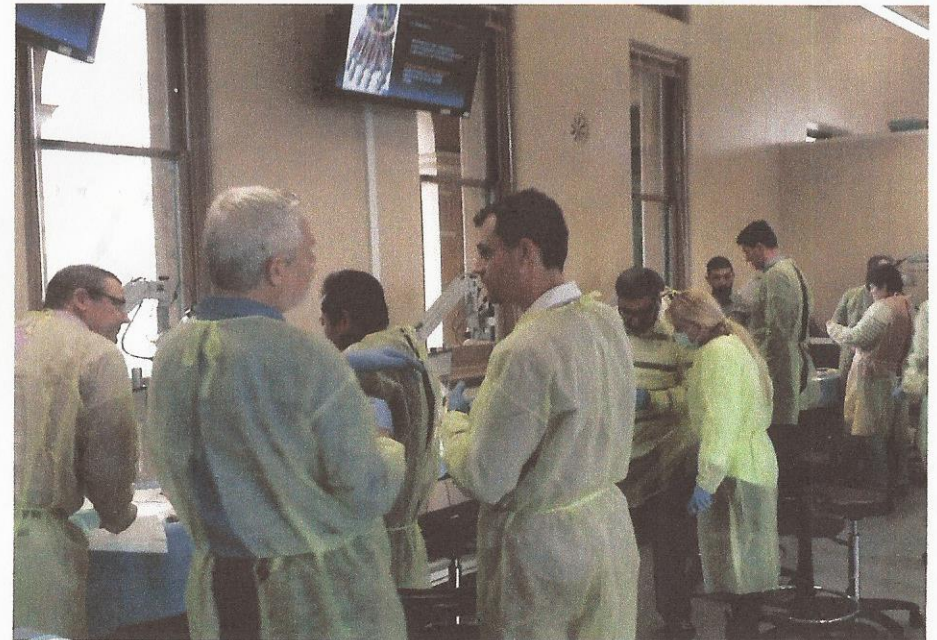
On 23 August 2017, Dr Ozcan will hold a therapeutic and diagnostic injection techniques course using real feet at Sydney Hospital. To book visit www.podiatry.asn.au/events

As well as the practical side Haydar discusses all the safety aspects of injecting and the importance of continually using the technique as much as possible.

"As injections are safe and being used more frequently to treat conditions like neuromas, plantar fasciitis, heel spurs, bursitis, Achilles heel, tendons and pain in general, all podiatrists should be making it part of their practice," he said.

Other types of therapies using injection are hydro dilation of tissue where saline is used to expand foot tissue to treat issues like tarsal tunnel syndrome. A new injection treatment is Prolo therapy where dextrose – a harmless sugar substance – is administered to treat tendonitis and joint disease. Other commonly used injection therapies include Plasma Rich Plate therapy (PRP) and cortisone injections.

"Overall podiatrists need to embrace injecting as a priority as it heightens their practitioner level and patients respect that. Also 50-60% of patients benefit from injection therapy for chronic conditions and of course in aesthesia its used for wart removal and nail surgery which can all be done in the clinic," he concluded.



PODIATRISTS LEARN INJECTION TECHNIQUES AT ONE OF HAYDAR'S CLASSES