

A Step Ahead

Capitol Orthopedic Prosthetic Newsletter

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LOREN'S LINES

IN MARCH, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT A CHALLENGING CASE TO A GROUP OF PEERS AT THE ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S PROSTHETIC-ORTHOTIC CLINICS (ACPOC) ANNUAL MEETING. WITH THE HELP OF DR. ANN MODRCIN OF CHILDREN'S MERCY HOSPITAL, WE WERE ABLE TO DISCUSS TREATMENT OPTIONS WITH PEERS FROM ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES AND SEVERAL COUNTRIES. I FEEL THAT IT IS IMPORTANT AS A PRACTITIONER TO STAY AT THE FOREFRONT OF TREATMENT OPTIONS AND PROSTHETIC TECHNOLOGY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE PATIENTS WITH THE MOST APPROPRIATE CARE POSSIBLE. THIS FORUM GAVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE IDEAS WITH THE LEADING MINDS IN PEDIATRIC ORTHOTIC AND PROSTHETIC CARE.

What Should I Expect?

Some of the most important treatment of a prosthetic patient occurs before an incision is ever made. Although a majority of amputees are involved in making the decision to have an amputation, the time after that decision can be filled with anxiety for both the patient and the family.

In some form, patients who know that they will be going through the amputation process will ask the question, 'What should I expect?' Reaction to this decision can range from determination to resume a full and active life despite the loss of a limb to a feeling of complete disability. Some of the questions on the patients mind may include: How hard is it to use a prosthesis?, How much function will I lose?, How much will it hurt?, Will my income be affected? While not all of these questions can be fully answered, they can be discussed with the patient. In some instances it may be helpful to have the patient meet another person who has gone through a similar situation to help answer some of the concerns they are having.

There may also be some question for the patient that are more personal in nature like, How will others see me? Or, How will my family react to me? Will intimacy with my spouse be affected? It is not uncommon for most amputees to go through multiple stages of grief, just as if they have lost a loved one.

Beyond answering the questions that the patient has, a discussion with the patient regarding realistic expectations after the surgery is a good idea. Often a patient will enter the office for evaluation for a prosthesis and they have the expectation

that the new prosthesis will simply replace what they had. While technology in the field of prosthetics has come a long way, we are not able to fully give back to them what they had. The patient should also know the importance of the rehabilitation process and that there is more to it than getting a prosthesis. They should be encouraged to enter a good physical or occupational therapy program to help them relearn how to function with activities of daily living and to make sure they are not doing too much too fast and causing additional harm.

All of this can be overwhelming, especially when they are dealing with a traumatic situation to begin with, but most of the time addressing the issues ahead of time eases the post surgery transition. Patients who had the opportunity to receive adequate preparation before surgery say that it contributes to their peace of mind after the surgery.

"Although it is hard to prove statistically that preparation has a bearing on the ultimate outcome, common sense, clinical observation, and the reports of amputees all suggest that proper preparation is highly desirable. Such preparation should include a clear explanation of the reasons for amputation; the viable alternatives, if any; the exact surgical procedure; and the rehabilitation process following it."¹

The surgeon, prothetist, physical and/or occupational therapist and possibly a social worker can all be involved in this process.

¹Atlas of Limb Prosthetics: Surgical, Prosthetic, and Rehabilitation Principles. Second Edition, 2002. Pg. 713.

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Combining patient care and advanced technology

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A Step Ahead: Prosthetic Newsletter In this Issue: Presurgical Amputee Care

Technology Update

A new knee unit has been introduced by Ossur, a provider of prosthetic components. Ossur claims the Rheo new knee unit will sense position and load on the knee 1000 times per second, and use that information to give the proper amount of resistance during each step. This in turn will give the patient more confidence that they will not fall, and enhance their sense of security.

Knees with microprocessors that aid in the control and knee flexion and extension are the height of technology in lower extremity prosthetics. By sensing and processing force measurements, they are able to reduce the likelihood of a fall. This provides more confidence for the patient. This is especially true for activities such as



climbing and descending ramps and stairs.

It is suggested that the Rheo knee will make virtual prosthetic adjustments as the patient walks to ensure that the most

appropriate setting is always being given to the patient. The details of how this is done goes beyond the scope of this newsletter, but the technology is exciting and a major advance for the field of prosthetics.

With other devices, the setting would have to be changed manually depending on the activity that the patient is wanting to participate in. With most knee units,

this would require a trip to their prosthetist for the adjustment.

As with all prosthetic components, this knee is not for all patients. The suggested indications by the manufacturer are: community or workplace ambulators who walk with varied cadence and may use stairs or ramps, low to moderate impact levels, or K3 level ambulator participating in normal daily activities would be ideal.

If you have a patient who would benefit from this technology, feel free to call us and ask any questions that you or your patient may have. Capitol Orthopedic Center is able to provide this new technology for any patient who would be a candidate. For more information please call 913.526.5271.