

The Care Digest

"Improving the Quality of Your Life is Our Primary Concern."



Vol 1. Issue #1 2007

The Care Digest ... keeping you informed about what's going on in the prosthetic and orthotic industry right here in St. Louis and around the world!

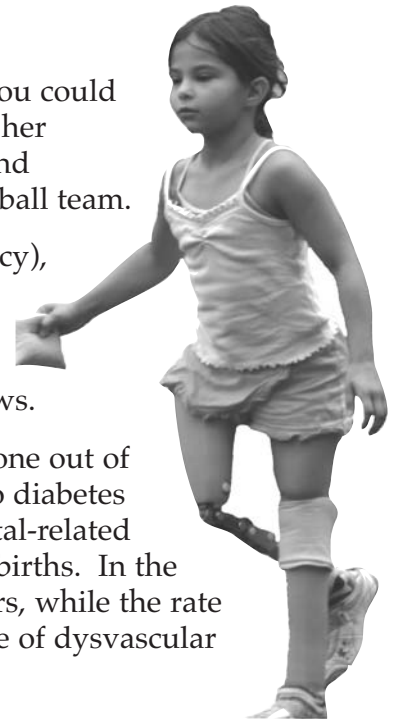
Nothing Slows Down Janetta

Janetta Rogers (right) is one of the most vibrant and active eight-year-olds you could ever meet. And the fact that she wears two prosthetic legs has never slowed her down. Janetta enjoys strolling the mall, winning summer camp relay races, and even ice skating! Her newest venture is playing on a third grade girls basketball team.

Born with a rare condition known as PFFD (Proximal Femoral Focal Deficiency), Janetta has worn a right above-the-knee prosthesis and a left below-the-knee prosthesis since she was one year old. Her prosthetist, Dan Luitjohan, sees her more often than most patients to make adjustments as she grows.



The Amputee Coalition of America reports that roughly one out of every 200 Americans live with limb loss, with 82% due to diabetes and peripheral vascular disease. Comparatively, congenital-related limb deficiencies happen in only 26 out of every 100,000 births. In the US, this rate has remained stable over the past thirty years, while the rate of trauma-related amputations has decreased and the rate of dysvascular amputations has risen considerably.



Amputees Rehabbing in Skilled Nursing & Out-Patient Facilities

A gradual shift in Medicare policy has greatly affected amputees and rehab facilities in the St. Louis region. Until recently, most amputees qualified for rehab with their new prosthesis in an acute care setting.

Within a hospital, they benefited from the care of experienced therapists and the camaraderie of other amputees. In the past several months, however, it has become increasingly difficult for new amputees to qualify with Medicare for such extensive rehab care.

While some remain in an acute setting, most amputees are now doing their therapy in skilled nursing and out-patient therapy facilities. This means that instead of being concentrated at a few specialized locations, St. Louis amputees are spread throughout the region.

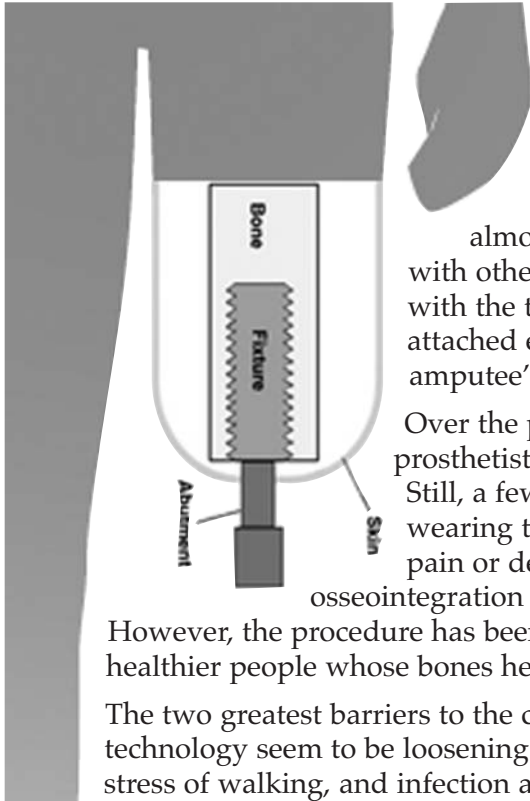
Area rehab organizations are working to get their best therapists into the settings where amputees now find themselves. Prosthetic companies like P&O Care are scrambling to educate more therapists in more facilities.

More than ever, amputees and their rehab team need to make sure they get the best care available.

The P&O Care Digest Funny...



Osseointegration Offers Promise, Problems



Osseointegration is a surgical procedure in which a titanium rod is implanted into bone. It has been used for some time in dental and facial prostheses, and efforts are now underway in Europe to perfect the technology for trans-femoral, above-the-knee amputees.

Titanium implants are so promising because the human body almost never rejects one as a foreign object, as sometimes happens with other implants and transplants. As the bone heals, it integrates fully with the titanium rod screwed into it. As a result, a prosthesis can be attached easily without the need to fabricate a custom socket around an amputee's residual limb.

Over the past several years, advances in prosthetic science have enabled prosthetists to make sockets that fit much more comfortably than in the past. Still, a few amputees have a difficult time wearing their prosthesis because of chronic pain or decreased circulation. For them, osseointegration offers a big improvement.

However, the procedure has been most successful in younger, healthier people whose bones heal best.

The two greatest barriers to the complete success of osseointegration technology seem to be loosening within the bone caused by the stress of walking, and infection at the site where the implant protrudes through the skin. Efforts to overcome these problems look promising.



A patient connects a prosthesis to a titanium implant.

This January, P&O Care had no deficiencies in our ABC facility reaccreditation!

The P&O Care Team Christmas Party



The P&O Care Team and their spouses held their Christmas party at Soulard's Restaurant.

Faux News:

Santa Gets New Leg, Begins Rehab

The North Pole— Breaking News! Santa Claus just underwent emergency below-the-knee amputation. Doctors attribute Santa's condition to diabetes, complicated by the billions of chocolate chip cookies he eats every year at Christmas.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, located in Atlanta, GA, estimates that 84,000 Americans lose their legs each year to complications from diabetes. Diabetes is a disease that weakens the body's ability to regulate blood sugar levels and blood pressure, making it very easy for diabetics like Santa Claus to damage the blood flow in their legs and feet. The same process damages nerves, making it easy for diabetics to injure their feet without ever knowing it.

North Pole, Inc. hopes that Santa's condition creates a greater awareness of diabetes and the procedure of amputation around the world. Santa also hopes to increase the understanding for those diabetics who struggle to maintain a healthy diet.

With Santa's mobility temporarily diminished, prosthetists from St. Louis have been making regular trips to the North Pole. Just one month after his surgery, Santa is now doing therapy with his new prosthetic leg. He plans to be right back up to speed by mid year and is eagerly anticipating the Christmas of 2007.



Santa has no easier time regulating his holiday consumption than the rest of us!

*Look for profiles of P&O Care's
Prosthetists and Orthotists
in every issue of The Care Digest.*



Ossur's new Proprio Foot

Ossur Introduces New Computerized Foot

There is a new prosthetic foot on the market that claims to be able to think for itself. The Proprio Foot by Ossur utilizes a small motor, computer chip, and complex software to create a more natural gait for active, below-knee amputees.

Until now, a wide variety of prosthetic feet have been designed for various activities from walking around the house to competing in track and field events. Meticulously crafted components such as carbon fiber springs and rubber bumpers make many prosthetic feet similar to human feet in the way they transfer energy, absorb shock, and rotate at the ankle for better stability. But the Proprio foot can automatically lift the toe just the right amount depending on what a person is doing, something no other foot can do.

Something as simple as sitting in a chair can look very awkward if your toe is always pointing up into the air, so the Proprio foot automatically lowers the toe when sitting. Additionally, when some amputees walk, they make a little more effort to keep the toe of their prosthetic foot from dragging the ground. By automatically lifting the toe at just the right moment in a person's stride, the Proprio foot removes the limp associated with this now-unnecessary thought process.

The Proprio foot costs between \$12,000 and \$18,000 and is not yet covered by Medicare, Medicaid, or insurance companies in the United States.

Profiles...

P&O Care Strengthens Orthotic Team and Promotes Richards

This January, P&O Care strengthened its orthotic program with the promotion of Dennis Richards to Lead Orthotist.

P&O Care now has three certified orthotists serving patients on both sides of the river: Dennis Richards, Jennifer Burget, and our newest orthotist John Lartonoix.

"I'm excited about our growth," Richards said. "It will enable us to serve more patients even faster than we have before. By making more braces in-house, we should dramatically reduce our turn-around time."

Richards began working with P&O Care in 2002 as an orthotic technician. In 2003 he graduated in the top five percent of his class from Northwestern Medical School's Orthotist Program. He then completed a residency and clinical training, which focused on TLSO applications for spinal deformities and impression techniques for all types of scoliosis.

Dennis received his ABC certification for orthotics in 2004, and since then has designed several new systems including a popular custom knee brace.



Dennis Richards, CO
ABC Certified Orthotist



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The Care Digest

Please let us know if you have an interesting story about a person, event, or trend that would be interesting to people who wear prosthetic and orthotic devices, or doctors, nurses, and rehab therapists.

Contact Bill McLellan: 314.779.4649 BMcLellan@PandOCare.com

Get connected to individuals and professionals with interests and questions just like yours.

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