

MEDIA RELEASE

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New resource for those facing amputation

People considering partial foot amputation surgery now have access to a free resource created by La Trobe University to help them make an informed decision in partnership with healthcare professionals.

A research team led by La Trobe prosthetics expert Associate Professor Michael Dillon launched [Amputation Decision Aid](#) - a collection of freely available resources for patients with peripheral arterial disease, and their healthcare professionals, as they decide on partial foot amputation as a treatment.

In Australia, there are more than 13,000 amputations performed every year because of complications from illnesses. The majority of people have toes or their forefoot removed, with partial foot amputation typically affecting middle aged and older people with diabetes and peripheral arterial disease.

But Associate Professor Dillon said many patients were poorly informed about the surgery, the likely outcomes, as well as the potential for complications.

“Through our interviews for this project, we found most patients facing the prospect of partial foot amputation worry whether they’ll walk again, unaware of the high rates of complications, such as delayed wound healing, the need for further amputation in the future.”

Dr Dillon said choosing partial amputation was a life-changing decision for patients and their families.

“We want to ensure people can have a meaningful conversation with their healthcare provider and receive accurate and unbiased information about treatment options, likely outcomes, and risks. We want them to be supported to make truly informed decisions about amputation surgery.”

The team worked with an expert advisory panel that included people with lived experience of partial foot amputation, surgeons, podiatrists, and wound care experts.

The research team have launched a website that includes the Amputation Decision Aid which was written specifically for people facing decisions about amputation surgery. It includes unbiased information about the different amputation surgeries, the likely outcomes and risks of complications. In addition, the team have developed the Amputation Discussion Guide as a companion resource for healthcare providers. It includes up-to-date research evidence and example conversation starters to facilitate conversations tailored to the needs of each individual patient.

A series of animated training videos help healthcare providers learn more about shared decision-making and how the resources can be utilised in clinical practice.

Melissa Noonan AM, chief executive of Limbs4Life, Australia's peak body for limb loss and a national amputee support group, said the resources were a "game changer".

"Amputation is a life changing experience, and people need information so that they can make an educated choice. Knowledge is power and having access to that knowledge, as well the opportunity to have conversations with loved ones, and support from people with personal lived experience is valuable to providing insight into what the future looks like," she said.

To find out more about this work visit: <https://www.amputationdecisionaid.com>

Media Officer: Madeline Walker, 0487 448 734, madeline.walker@latrobe.edu.au