

Definitions of Clinical Terms related to Podiatric Surgery

Any Clinical Title which includes the term “Podiatric” denotes an independent clinician who is clinically qualified to diagnose and treat foot problems. **Podiatric clinicians are not doctors (i.e. Registered Medical Practitioners)**, but have instead specialised throughout their training, purely in the treatment of one area of the body i.e. the foot and associated structures.

Podiatric Surgery:

Podiatric surgery is a specialised form of foot surgery performed by podiatric surgeons. This specialised approach to foot surgery was developed, originally in the United States of America, in order to improve upon the existing methods of surgery. Until the development of podiatric surgery, orthopaedic surgeons undertook almost all foot surgery, and very few people were referred for foot surgery because waiting lists were so long.

Most podiatric surgery is undertaken:

- using local anaesthetic (with some patients, general anaesthesia/sedation may be preferred).
- on a Day-case basis (i.e. the patient is admitted, has their operation & goes home on same day)

Podiatrist:

A Podiatrist has studied for three years to obtain a degree in podiatric medicine and become eligible for Statutory Registration. Podiatrists are independent clinicians, qualified to diagnose and treat foot problems. Podiatrists may specialise in particular areas of work with extended scope e.g. diabetes related or musculoskeletal podiatry. With the exception of nail surgery, podiatrists undertake the treatment of foot problems by non-invasive methods (until recently podiatrists were known as chiropodists).

Musculoskeletal Podiatrist (Extended Scope Practitioner):

A Musculoskeletal Podiatrist Extended Scope Practitioner (MSK podiatrist) is an experienced podiatrist with specialist training, knowledge and extended scope in assessing, diagnosing, planning, implementing and evaluating podiatric care to patients with lower limb musculoskeletal pathology (biomechanics). Where appropriate, an MSK podiatrist will advise and instruct patients on foot health to try and avoid foot problems and where necessary provide treatment by prescribing and fitting appropriate orthoses (foot and ankle supports), injection therapy and a range of other non-surgical treatments. MSK podiatrists work closely in partnership with the Podiatric Surgery team, the orthopaedic team, physiotherapy and orthotists.

Podiatric Surgery Trainee:

After a 3 year BSc(Hons) degree course in podiatric medicine, a graduate podiatrist who wishes to become a podiatric surgeon must complete a minimum 2 year post registration before commencing a Masters degree course in the Theory of Podiatric Surgery. This course is run by the Faculty of Surgery, College of Podiatrists and is jointly validated by the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

After completing the post graduate diploma section of this course including Masters degree modules in Anatomy, physiology, medicine and pathology, podiatric biomechanics and diagnostic imaging/interpretation - candidates may then complete an Objective Assessment of Professional Skills Test at one of the five designated UK centres. This allows the candidates to apply for a surgical training post in our department where they will gain a comprehensive experience in foot surgery under the direct supervision of our NHS Consultant Podiatric Surgeons.

If you do not wish trainee participation in your care - please notify a member of staff. Such a request will NOT disadvantage you.

During this training, surgical trainees undergo regular assessment of knowledge and practical skills and keep a detailed log of their experience. Further practical exams in clinical diagnosis and surgical treatment planning are also completed during this period which culminates in a Fellowship exam when the candidates' surgical ability and clinical experience is examined by two senior fellows appointed by the Faculty of Podiatric Surgery. Exam candidates must perform a comprehensive range of foot surgery on a number of patients.

Specialist Registrar in Podiatric Surgery (SpR):

Having successfully passed their final surgical assessment & been awarded Fellowship of the Faculty of Podiatric Surgery newly qualified podiatric surgeons are entitled to apply for NHS Specialist Registrar posts to further develop their podiatric surgical skills and experience. At the end of the 3 year Specialist Registrar post, the podiatric surgeon must submit their log book to the Faculty of Podiatric surgery for the award of the Certificate of Completion in Podiatric Surgical Training (CCPST). The CCPST allows the podiatric surgeon to apply for NHS Consultant Podiatric surgeon posts.

Podiatric Surgeon:

On completion of the surgical training described above & having being awarded the Certificate of Completion in Podiatric Surgical Training (CCPST), the successful individual is allowed to use the title "Podiatric Surgeon"

As can be seen from the nature of the training and qualification system described in the preceding sections a podiatric surgeon is a non-medically qualified specialist in the treatment of all foot problems by both surgical & non-surgical methods (***a podiatric surgeon is to feet, very much like a dentist is to teeth****). Podiatric surgeons are not doctors (i.e. Registered Medical Practitioners). Podiatric surgeons have specialised throughout their training, purely in the treatment of one body area, i.e. the foot & ankle.

Consultant Podiatric Surgeon:

After some years of practice within a Health Service Podiatric Department, a podiatric surgeon may be appointed as a consultant i.e. the lead clinician appointed by an NHS Trust to provide a podiatric surgery service.

All such posts are awarded by a carefully assembled appointments panel in keeping with the high standards of clinical governance demanded by the UK National Health Service.

Anaesthetist:

Anaesthetists are doctors (i.e. Registered Medical Practitioners). Anaesthetists are generally understood as the doctors who 'put you to sleep for surgery'. If sedation or general anaesthesia is required this will be provided for you by the Anaesthetist.

* 1993 Statement by Mr RJ Izon (Dental Surgeon), who was also at that time the Chief Executive of the then Herefordshire Community Health Trust, which subsequently evolved into Herefordshire PCT.