**From evidence to access: Embedding instant total contact casting for diabetic foot ulcers in a regional setting**

**Background & Aim**

Diabetes-related foot ulcers (DFUs) are a leading cause of hospitalisation and lower-limb amputation in Australia. National guidelines recommend irremovable knee-high offloading as first-line treatment. However, regional services often face barriers including limited staff, training, and access to traditional total contact casting (TCC). In 2024, Townsville Hospital and Health Service piloted an adapted technique—Instant Total Contact Casting (iTCC)—using readily available materials. This quality improvement project aimed to improve access to guideline-concordant care by embedding iTCC into routine podiatry practice.

**Methods**

The iTCC was implemented at Kirwan Health Campus by the podiatry department. A protocol and clinical checklist were co-designed with frontline clinicians and endorsed by interdisciplinary stakeholders. Podiatrists were trained to apply the iTCC using a removable walker, felt, plaster, and cohesive tape to replicate the offloading properties of a traditional TCC. Implementation activities included iterative testing, team feedback, and process documentation. Clinical audits tracked uptake, acceptability, and early outcomes.

**Results**

Since July 2024, 70% of clinicians have been deemed competent in iTCC application. Among people treated with iTCC, 92% of DFUs showed measurable improvement, and 41.6% had healed by last device use. Healing occurred over an average of 3.2 encounters. Clinicians reported greater confidence and streamlined integration into workflows. People receiving care reported high satisfaction with comfort and timely access to offloading. Audit data showed reduced delays to initiating gold-standard treatment.

**Discussion/Conclusion**

The iTCC model offers a practical, scalable solution to offloading barriers in regional services. Embedding the approach improved access, clinician engagement, and early clinical outcomes. Ongoing evaluation will assess long-term healing trajectories and inform scale-up across other regional and remote services.