

Guidelines for working with Foot Care Assistants in Podiatry Practice

Introduction

The Podiatrists Board of New Zealand (PBNZ) have developed these guidelines to provide guidance to podiatry practitioners for the use of foot care assistants.

Application of these guidelines

The guidelines apply to all registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons who may use foot care assistants in their podiatry practice.

Purpose of guidelines

The guidelines outline a range of considerations for podiatry practitioners wanting to delegate tasks to a foot care assistant for patient or client care or treatment. These considerations emphasise the importance of quality and safety of care and service.

Foot care assistants must comply with the HDC Code of Patient's Rights.

[The Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights](#) grants a number of rights to all consumers of health and disability services in Aotearoa New Zealand and places corresponding obligations on providers of those services. The Code extends to any person or organisation providing or holding themselves out as providing a health service to the public or to a section of the public.

Requirements for working with foot care assistants

The precise nature of the duties of foot care assistants will vary depending on the size and location of the practice and the training and experience of the foot care assistant. The podiatry practitioner who has oversight of the assistant is **directly accountable** for the designated tasks of the assistant, the care provided to the patient or client by the assistant, and for the conduct of the foot care assistant.

The podiatry practitioner with oversight of the foot care assistant should ensure the following before delegation of tasks:

1. The risks associated with a patient's condition and certain tasks, and the complexity of tasks being considered.
2. A podiatry practitioner has assessed the person who is to receive care before any interaction with a foot care assistant.
3. The person receiving care has been provided with informed consent for all procedures provided by the foot care assistant.
4. The footcare assistant;
 - has knowledge and skills to effectively and safely carry out the delegated tasks;
 - documents all care provided;
 - understands the role of the podiatry practitioner;
 - has timely access to the podiatry practitioner;
 - maintains confidentiality of patient or client information;
 - complies with all relevant legislation.
5. The patient or client receiving care from a foot care assistant is reassessed by the podiatry practitioner every 12 months, or earlier if there is a change in foot health status that is identified by the assistant.
6. It is the podiatry practitioner's responsibility to ensure adequate levels of oversight are available whenever needed, to support the foot care assistant.
7. Each workplace should have appropriate evaluation and monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure the delivery of safe and quality services.

Delegated tasks for foot care assistants

The tasks and duties that the podiatry practitioner may delegate to the foot care assistant depend on the range of competencies of that foot care assistant to safely undertake the delegated tasks.

Definitions

In these guidelines, a foot care assistant is a member of staff who is employed within a practice or facility and assists a podiatry practitioner in the delivery of services to patients or clients.

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