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Background: Hydro-debridement is a new specialised system that is aimed at debriding complex wounds at the bedside. Debridement of necrotic tissue in a diabetic foot ulcer is of paramount importance due to the high risk of gangrene and amputation.

Aim: To present a case study of an individual with an extensive necrotic diabetic foot ulcer requiring surgical debridement with the hydro-debridement system.

Method: This case involves a 39 year old patient with a 20 year history of diabetes mellitus. He presented to the diabetic day centre with a small necrotic ulcer on his distal left big toe which rapidly deteriorated to encompass his entire fore foot. The wound measured approximately 12x3 cm with 100% thick fibrinous yellow sloughy tissue with two remaining necrotic digits. The patient refused surgical debridement in theatre. The decision to debride with hydro-debridement was made in collaboration with the patient and multi-disciplinary team.

Results: The patient required two debridement sessions occurring at the bedside in February 2009. Each session took approximately 20 minutes, resulting in an 80% decrease in sloughy tissue. The wound was dressed with topical negative pressure and reviewed on a weekly basis. Off loading was achieved with a casting tape*. Complete wound healing occurred by June 2009.

Conclusion: Debridement is essential in diabetic foot ulcers. The use of the Hydro debridement was a successful tool in debriding this wound. The tool is quick, easy to utilise, and can operate at the bedside with minimum personnel, saving Operating Theatre time and resources.

* Scotch cast