

Going the extra mile with Mera Joseph



Mera Joseph has been in business for six years and is the Director of BodyMed in South Australia.

Joseph doesn't shy away from going the extra mile when helping her patients and ensures that first-class care is maintained across all of her four clinics "from the ground up".

"Our company mission is to help people live well for longer. We want people to not only live longer, but have a really good quality of life so we always look for ways to make improvements to their wellbeing," Mera claimed.

"If a patient has reduced balance, we work on strengthening their proprioception [which includes being able to walk or kick without looking at your

feet] and if they have a painful ingrown toenail, we help them be pain free," she added.

Mera decided on a career in podiatry because of a fascination with lower limbs. "We have the most bones in our feet and I find it truly amazing that our feet carry our entire body weight. It is sadly also the most neglected part of our body," Joseph emphasised.

Mera believes that podiatrists are the experts of the most important parts of a person's anatomy, but there are challenges to obtain a necessary level of commit from people to the treatment process. "We are underestimated. Our treatments can provide long-lasting relief, but we don't offer a band aid approach and it can be quite costly depending on the needs of the patient. Ultimately, it is the patient that needs to be completely on board with the process, and their recovery conclusively depends on that," she certified.

Treating patients as if they are family members is the advice Mera gives to those seeking a career as a foot specialist. "You also have to be caring, gentle, honest and empathetic. Another fundamental aspect to being a successful podiatrist is upskilling and development — you have to keep learning as the profession evolves and changes," she stated.

"It is very important to read and listen to lots of up-to-date information. I recommend going to conferences and signing up to face-to-face sessions. I also have a network of other podiatrists that I love to catch up with on a monthly basis to have a chat on what's new in our profession. Networking is essential," affirmed Mera.

Mera Joseph maintains that the most common issue she diagnoses is heel pain. The treatment plan she prescribes or actions after a thorough assessment of a patient is as follows:

1. Footwear changes
2. Stretches and strengthening exercises
3. Strapping

4. Dry needling or shockwave therapy
5. Orthotic therapy
6. Strasburg splint (that usually comes as a sock and were made to stretch and alleviate heel pain associated with common overuse injuries)

The best-selling product at BodyMed is Archies Arch Support Thongs that are designed with an arch, providing orthotic support that encourages optimal foot posture. “They have done very well for us,” reflected Mera.

Mera Joseph recommended that people need to look after their feet when they are young. “Your feet are so important! if you don’t take care of your feet, they won’t take care of you,” she said.