**Transcript**

***Byron Perrin – The foot health personal beliefs of people with diabetes***

My area of research interest involves people with diabetes and peripheral neuropathy which is numb feet. And, this is a significant problem because it can have a devastating impact on an individual. It can lead to problems such as skin ulceration and lower limb amputation. And, actually diabetes-related foot problems related to numb feet or peripheral neuropathy contributes a large proportion of the diabetes-related health care expenditure. So my hypothesis, although it’s interesting before I get to the hypothesis, that we actually know what causes significant foot health problems due to peripheral neuropathy. You, know, we know the physical causes of that. The problem is is that health professionals aren’t really making a big impact on the problem. So, we’re sort of looking for other reasons for why we’re having trouble dealing with this issue. So, my hypothesis, if you like, for my research is, is focussed around psychological aspects of the condition and the hypothesis being that foot or beliefs and thoughts about, that that people have with regard to their foot health may be related to their foot care behaviour, how they protect their feet and also foot care outcomes.

Well, I’ve just about finished my research and it’s, it’s been interesting. We have been able to identify distinct patterns or clusters or groups of people with diabetes who have unique thoughts and beliefs about their condition. And, there are some minor relationships between those thoughts and beliefs with behaviour but it’s not that convincing actually which is a little bit surprising because in lots of other areas of health there is quite a demonstrated association between what people think about their condition and how they behave towards their condition. So, something’s going on with people with peripheral neuropathy or numb feet, and it’s not necessarily what they think or believe about their condition. It might be a bit more fundamental such as what does it mean when a person loses the ability to feel pain or to have that body’s unique warning system for protecting themselves.

Well probably in the immediate implications might be, with respect to research, in that the we’ve further validated our, some measurement tools to measure thoughts and beliefs and behaviour in people with diabetes and we have, you know, made some recommendations about, you know, how to better improve those. But I think this research also supports the contention, or the previous research that is out there that suggests that when we’re dealing with people with peripheral neuropathy or numb feet, you really do, the health professionals involved really do need to stay closely involved and can’t rely on a person to self-regulate their behaviour because they just don’t have the warning signs.