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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Obesity affects foot development in children

The relationship between foot development and its link to obesity within children was identified by Dr Stewart Morrison during the 2017 Australasian Podiatry Conference at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre this May.

According to Dr. Stewart Morrison, a Senior Lecturer in Podiatry at the University of Brighton, obesity has an effect on foot development in children.

Obesity is an important determinant of paediatric foot dimensions. Given the current rate of obesity in children and young people, these findings may have population wide implications for paediatric foot health.

Children's feet are constantly developing during the early years of their life, and there is a major concern that without proper fitted shoes, long-term foot development may be affected.

The economic factor is what parents can afford, parents should seek out shops where their children's feet can be measured so they can get direct advice on what are the right shoes for their children, "as good foot health is key to allowing children exercise effectively," said Dr. Morrison.

According to Dr. Morrison, many orthopaedic problems have been identified as an outcome of childhood obesity. A study by Stewart Morrison, David McCarthy and Ryan Mahaffey titled *Growth trajectories of the paediatric foot: relationships with obesity* aimed to determine associations between obesity and paediatric foot dimensions.

A retrospective analysis of paediatric foot dimensions was undertaken in 3,713 children aged 3-18 years. The analysis indicated that typical weighted boys and girls had significantly shorter, narrower feet, unlike obese peers whose feet had developed differently.

"There has been a shift in the trend of how obese children's feet develop," Dr. Morrison said.

According to Morrison, this raises the concern that childhood obesity affects the foot size and shape of developing feet.

"The clinical significance is that it poses a challenge for parents to get good fitted shoes for their children."

Dr. Morrison aim is that parents will seek out the right podiatric attention for their children's developing feet.

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