

**Investigations prior to plantar fascia release surgery
15HDC00645, 23 June 2017**

Podiatric surgeon ~ Heel pain ~ Plantar fascia release surgery ~ Right 4(1)

A man was involved in an accident and suffered multiple fractures to his right foot. The man underwent treatment with a physiotherapist and returned to work.

The following year, the man was experiencing bilateral heel pain and sought treatment from the physiotherapist, a podiatrist, and his general practitioner. Unfortunately, the man's heel pain continued. The general practitioner referred the man to a podiatric surgeon.

The man consulted the podiatric surgeon, who diagnosed bilateral plantar fascia and scheduled the man for plantar fascia release surgery on both feet (bilateral fasciotomy).

The podiatric surgeon performed plantar fascia release surgery on the man's right foot. Following this, the man attended two postoperative consultations. The man told the podiatric surgeon that for the previous week his foot had been painful while at work.

The podiatric surgeon then performed plantar fascia release surgery on the man's left foot. Following this, the man returned for several postoperative consultations. The man continued to experience heel pain and made the decision not to consult with the podiatric surgeon again.

Findings

By failing to perform adequate investigations prior to undertaking bilateral fasciotomy, and failing to ensure that the first surgical procedure had been successful before proceeding with the second surgical procedure, the podiatric surgeon did not provide services to the man with reasonable care and skill, and breached Right 4(1).

The podiatric surgeon was referred to the Director of Proceedings. The Director decided not to issue proceedings.

Recommendations

The Deputy Commissioner recommended that, should the podiatric surgeon seek to resume practice in the future, the Podiatrists Board of New Zealand review his competency prior to issuing a practising certificate.

The Deputy Commissioner recommended that, should the podiatric surgeon resume practice, he engage a mentor in podiatric practice to be present during the first six months of his practice. The mentor is to be endorsed by the Podiatrists Board of New Zealand.

The Deputy Commissioner recommended that the podiatric surgeon provide a written apology to the man for breaching the Code.