Wound Inflammatory Index: A “Proof of Concept” Study to Assess Wound Healing Trajectory

Manish Bharara, Ph.D.,1 Jeffrey Schoess, P.E.,2 Aksone Nouvong, D.P.M.,3 and David G. Armstrong, D.P.M., M.D., Ph.D.1

Abstract

Diabetes around the globe results in one major limb amputation every 30 seconds, over 2500 limbs lost per day. The underlying pathophysiology sometimes leads to a chronic inflammatory stage, which may prevent appropriate healing, and therefore, the need for a clear strategy for assessing and classifying wounds and wound healing cannot be overstated. Temperature is a surrogate marker for inflammation. Quantitative thermography using a numerical index provides a useful way to assess wound healing. Advances in technology have afforded the availability of low-cost, high-resolution thermal imaging systems, which can be used to quantify sensitive changes on the skin surface and may be particularly useful to develop monitoring strategies for wounds. This article provides a standardized technique for calculating a thermal index (TI) supported with a case report from assessment of a diabetic foot ulcer. In this single case study, the TI/wound inflammatory index indicates a shift from negative to positive (p < .05) before it reaches zero.


Author Affiliations: 1Southern Arizona Limb Salvage Alliance (SALSA), College of Medicine, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona; 2Eden Medical, Inc., Howard Lake, Minnesota; and 3College of Podiatric Medicine, Western University of Health Sciences, Pomona, California

Abbreviations: (TI) thermal index, (WII) wound inflammatory index

Keywords: diabetic foot ulcers, thermal index, thermography, thermometry, wound healing

Corresponding Author: Manish Bharara, Ph.D., Southern Arizona Limb Salvage Alliance (SALSA), College of Medicine, University of Arizona, 1501 N. Campbell Ave., Room 4318, Tucson, AZ 85724; email address manish.bharara@gmail.com