

## Case note

# Bilateral below-knee amputee 107 years old and still wearing artificial limbs

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### Abstract

It is not often that a person over 100 years old is able to walk on artificial limbs and maintain their mobility and independence after going through bilateral below-knee amputation.

This case note is about a 107 year old lady with bilateral below-knee amputation, who is perhaps the oldest surviving bilateral below-knee amputee in the British Isles, if not in the World.

There does not appear to be any reference in the literature to a bilateral below-knee amputee of 100 years old plus, who is still alive and wearing his or her artificial limbs. The nearest is of a 91 year old lady with bilateral below-knee amputation and wearing artificial limbs, reported by Gerhardt et al, 1986.

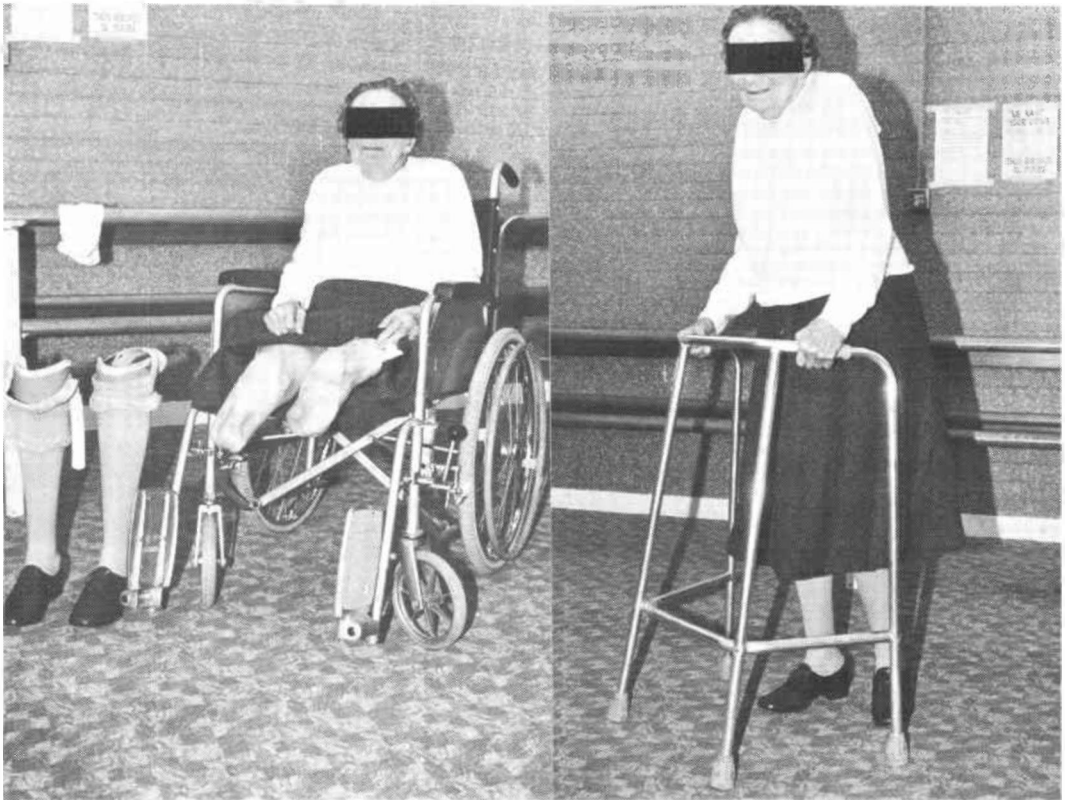


Fig. 1. The patient with her prostheses and in the walking frame.

### The patient

Mrs J. S. who was born in 1881, lived her early life actively until 1976 when she fell and fractured her left femur and sustained a degloving injury to the skin of her left leg. The fractured femur healed, but the skin of her left leg failed to heal despite various skin grafts, which failed to take, and a deep ulcer developed which warranted left below-knee amputation. Mrs J. S. was just 95-years old then. Peripheral vascular disease was diagnosed and she was rehabilitated on a patellar-tendon-bearing (PTB) prosthesis with limited success. Two years later in 1978 she developed an ischaemic ulcer on her right foot, which failed to respond to conservative treatment and right below-knee amputation was carried out.

She was given bilateral PTB pylons, followed by Modular PTB prostheses. Mrs J. S. was nearly 98-years old and was able to maintain her mobility on a pair of modular PTB prostheses.

After her 106th birthday, she complained about the weight of her artificial limbs, which she was still wearing all the time. A pair of

carbon fibre PTB prostheses with polypropylene sockets and Pelite liners were provided and from the day she took delivery of this pair of carbon fibre prostheses, she has never looked back—she is able to walk, aided with a walking frame, and she wears her artificial limbs all day and every day (Fig. 1).

### Rehabilitation

Mrs J. S. is a slim lady—48 kg in weight, 1.57m in height with good hearing and good eyesight—apart from very mild arthritic deformities in her hands she is in good health and has full range of movement in both hips and knees and good balance.

However, early rehabilitation with one prosthesis met with limited success due to the pain in her other leg, but after her second amputation, she was able to walk, with the help of a walking frame, from the start. She was very motivated and willing to walk.

At present she is still independent and walks with a walking frame indoors.

### REFERENCE

- GERHARDT, J. J., KING, P. S., ZETTL, J. H. (1986). Immediate and early prosthetic management: rehabilitation aspects. Toronto: Hans Huber Publishers. pp 156–157.

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