

## Option to save limbs - Fiji Times Online



Health Minister Jone Usamate is attended to by nurse Vatiseva Delai during the 13th-year anniversary of Friends Fiji in Lautoka. Picture: JAI PRASAD

PRODUCING options without having to resort to amputation is one of the major aims of an ambitious non-communicable diseases focused research undertaken by the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) Fiji in the Western Division.

About 500 diabetic patients in Ba, Lautoka and Nadi will be screened to determine their risks for lower limb amputations or what could be offered before an amputation is carried out.

FRIEND Fiji medical director Dr Jone Hawea said determining the options available for diabetic patients were important because it offered a way out of amputation.

"When a diabetic patient goes to the hospital there are two basic options that are given and they are; one is to save a life and remove the limb; or keep the limb and lose a life," he said.

"It's a very difficult decision to make based on the very limited options that are available for medical professionals.

"We don't want that and so we are trying to determine what other options are there for our diabetic patients.

"So one of the biggest aims of this study is to be able to produce options in the early stages so that we don't have to reach a stage where the only option is to remove the lower limb."

Minister for Health and Medical Services Jone Usamate was the first to be screened during the

launching of the research in Lautoka over the weekend.

Mr Usamate said the research would also assist in improving medical services in the country.

He said research was a fundamental need at all health care stages and it was encouraging to know that "The Risk for Lower Limb Amputaion Amongst Diabetics" offered an opportunity to improve primary health care.