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**Magnitude of foot problems in diabetes in the developing world: a study of 1044 patients.**

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**Abstract**

**AIM:**

To gain insight into the prevalence of peripheral neuropathy, foot care practices, foot at risk and foot ulcers in patients with diabetes mellitus at a tertiary care centre.

**METHODS:**

A prospective case study involving 1044 patients with diabetes mellitus attending the diabetes clinic of a tertiary care centre in north India from January 2007 to May 2008. All subjects underwent a detailed clinical assessment including vibration perception threshold (VPT) and ankle brachial pressure index (ABI), along with metabolic parameters, and were categorized into ulcer, foot at risk and patients with no risk factors. Foot care practices were assessed with a questionnaire. Peripheral neuropathy was defined as VPT score  $\geq 25$  V. Peripheral vascular disease (PVD) was defined as ABI  $< 0.9$ . One hundred and forty-nine patients with foot at risk were followed up for 9.0  $\pm$  2.3 months (range 5-13 months).

**RESULTS:**

The prevalence of peripheral neuropathy was 34.9% and of PVD 12.6%. Two thirds of the patients were at risk for foot ulceration; 9% had an ulcer and 20.2% of them required amputation. Correct foot care practices were followed by 214 (20.5%) subjects of the whole study population and by only 135 (19.3%) of the patients with foot at risk. Improvement in glycaemic control in the patients on follow-up was associated with improvement or stabilization of VPT score. Five (3.4%) patients developed new ulcers on follow-up.

**CONCLUSION:**

The high prevalence of neuropathy and PVD, coexisting with poor adherence to foot care practices predisposes to foot problems in people with diabetes in our study population.

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