

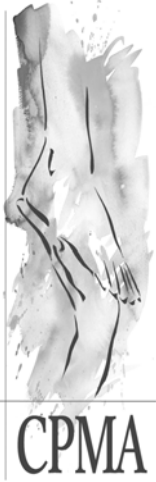
World Diabetes Day 2005: Diabetes and Foot Care

PUT FEET FIRST: PREVENT AMPUTATIONS

Diabetes is a serious chronic disease. In 2003 the global prevalence of diabetes was estimated at 194 million. This figure is predicted to reach 333 million by 2025 as a consequence of longer life expectancy, sedentary lifestyle and changing dietary patterns. Although many serious complications, such as kidney failure or blindness, can affect individuals with diabetes, it is the complications of the foot that take the greatest toll. Of all lower extremity amputations, 40-70% are related to diabetes. In most studies the incidence of lower leg amputation is estimated to be 5-25/100,000 inhabitants/year: among people with diabetes the figure is 6-8/1,000.

Lower extremity amputations are usually preceded by a foot ulcer in people with diabetes. The most important factors related to the development of these ulcers are peripheral neuropathy, foot deformities, minor foot trauma and peripheral vascular disease. The spectrum of foot lesions varies in different regions of the world due to differences in socio-economic conditions, standards of foot care and quality of footwear.

The diabetic foot is a significant economic problem, particularly if amputation results in prolonged hospitalization, rehabilitation, and an increased need for home care and social services. Approximately 3-4% of all people with diabetes have a foot problem and use 12-15% of the healthcare resources. The average cost for primary



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Page 2

healing in the USA has been estimated to be between US\$7,000 and US\$10,000. The direct cost of an amputation associated with the diabetic foot is estimated to be between US\$30,000 and US\$60,000. The estimated cost for three years of subsequent care ranges from US\$43,000 to US\$63,000 – mainly due to the increased need for home care and social services. The corresponding cost for individuals with primary care has been estimated to be just over US\$16,000 to nearly US\$27,000. In addition to these costs, there are indirect costs due to loss of productivity to consider. If cost estimates are broadened to include the costs to the individual and loss of quality of life, then the estimated cost of the diabetic foot in the USA is some US\$4 billion a year.

Foot complications are one of the most serious and costly complications of diabetes. However, through a care strategy that combines: prevention; the multi-disciplinary treatment of foot ulcers; appropriate organization; close monitoring, and the education of people with diabetes and healthcare professionals, it is possible to reduce amputation rates by between 49% and 85%. It is this objective that should motivate the advocacy work of those fighting to make a difference for those living with diabetes around the world.

It is imperative that we increase awareness among caregivers at all levels of healthcare services worldwide. It is imperative that we reduce the unnecessary suffering that foot complications can bring. It is imperative that we act now!

During November's American Diabetes Awareness Month and World Diabetes Awareness Day (November 14) The California Podiatric Medical Association (CPMA) will be working to increase awareness of diabetes and its complications with its ***Knock Your Socks Off*** Campaign, which encourages foot screenings at annual checks to detect the early signs of diabetes, since the feet often show the first signs and symptoms of diabetes. Early detection can avoid complications, and reduce the number of lower-limb amputations.

Foot Facts

- Every 30 seconds a leg is lost to diabetes somewhere in the world.
- Up to 70% of all leg amputations happen to people with diabetes.
- In developed countries, up to five per cent of people with diabetes have a foot problem.
- Foot problems are the most common cause of admission to hospital for people with diabetes.
- In developing countries, it is estimated that foot problems may account for as much as 40% of available healthcare resources.
- The direct cost of an amputation associated with the diabetic foot is estimated to be between US\$30,000 and US\$60,000.
- Most amputations begin with a foot ulcer.
- One in every six people with diabetes will have a foot ulcer during their lifetime. Each year 4 million people worldwide get a foot ulcer.
- In most cases diabetic foot ulcers and amputations can be prevented. It is estimated that up to 85% of amputations could be avoided.
- Significant reductions in amputations can be achieved by well-organized diabetic foot care teams, good diabetes control and well-informed self care.

The California Podiatric Medical Association (CPMA) is the state's leading professional medical organization for foot and ankle specialists and represents more than 1000 California doctors of podiatric medicine (DPMs). Since 1912 CPMA has served the people of California by promoting the science and art of podiatric medicine, protecting the public health, and elevating the standards of medical education.

CPMA, Committed to keeping Californians on their Feet – Healthy, Active and Productive!