Patient Education: Importance of Diabetic Foot Care

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PATIENT EDUCATION: IMPORTANCE OF DIABETIC FOOT CARE

JOHN PAUL NSUBUGA, MS3
WINOOSKI, VT
FAMILY MEDICINE CLERKSHIP, FEB-MARCH 2018
MENTORS: DR. ANN GOERING, MD, DR. CHARLES D. MACLEAN, MD
PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND NEED

- Diabetes continues to cause devastating health consequences in the United States, especially in Vermont, where 10% of the population or approximately 55,780 suffer from this debilitating disease and its numerous complications that including amputations, osteomyelitis, peripheral artery disease and chronic kidney disease.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of non-traumatic lower extremity amputation in the United States.
- It is estimated that greater than 85% of all non traumatic amputations begin with diabetic foot ulcers.
- Diabetic foot problems are responsible for more hospitalization than any other diabetic complication.
- Proper foot care is therefore of utmost importance in the care and management of patients with diabetes.
PUBLIC HEALTH COST

• In Vermont, it is estimated that diabetes and prediabetes cost the state an estimated $543 million in health care costs each year.

• It is estimated that people with diabetes have 2.3 times higher medical expenses than those without diabetes.

• Diabetic foot ulcers and other foot complications impose a substantial burden on public and private payers in the United States, doubling care costs per patient compared with diabetic patients without foot ulcers.
COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

- “Lack of patient self management education material on proper footcare is one of the biggest barriers in diabetic patient adhering to good footcare management.”

- “Having more educational materials that patients can take home can help provide helpful reminders about proper diabetic footcare.”
  
  - Rebecca O’Reilly, MS, RD; Diabetes Program Manager at Vermont Department of Health

- “Physicians are not doing enough and can stand to do more in educating patients on the importance of proper diabetic foot care management.”

- “Having educational material readily available in patient rooms can provide helpful reminders for physicians to discuss proper foot care management at each visit not just at annual wellness exam visits.”
  
  - Dr. Charles D. MacLean, MD; Associate Dean, Primary Care, University of Vermont, Larner College of Medicine
INTERVENTION AND METHODOLOGY

- Reviewed current literature on proper diabetic foot care management.
- Discussed with different community providers (MDs, NP, PAs) and diabetes educators about the importance and barriers to proper diabetic footcare management.
- Created brochure with information on:
  - The importance of proper diabetic foot care
  - Tips and guidelines for good foot care management
INTERVENTION - BROCHURE

For More Information, Please Visit:
- National Diabetes Education Program: 1-800-835-4357
  www.ndep.nih.gov
- American Association of Diabetes Educators: 1-800-999-6675
  www.diabeteseducators.org
- American Diabetes Association: 1-800-533-4636 (1-800-533-DIAB)
  www.diabetes.org
- American Pediatric Medical Association (APMA): 202-463-9363
  www.apma.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
  www.cdc.gov/diabetes
- Centres for Medicare & Medicaid Services: 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)
  www.medicare.gov
- Vinnik Family Health
  125 Valley Way
  South Burlington, Vermont 05403
  802-285-6422
  www.vfh.org

FOOTCARE FOR DIABETES:
To Avoid Foot Complications, Follow these Simple Guidelines:
1. Inspect your feet daily.
   - Look for sores, blisters, or redness.
   - Check for calluses, corns, and nail changes.
2. Wash your feet at least once a day.
   - Use warm, not hot, water, and use nonslip-soled shoes.
3. Trim your toenails regularly.
   - Use clippers, not scissors.
4. Keep your feet warm.
   - Wear socks to keep your feet warm.
5. Avoid nylon or tights.
6. Wear non-leather shoes.
7. Keep your feet dry.
8. Inspect your feet regularly.
10. Protect your feet from cuts and abrasions.

Why Proper Footcare is Important:
- Diabetes can cause the skin to become dry and thin, making it easier for injuries to occur.
- Poor circulation can cause the body to heal slowly.
- Numbness in the feet can make it difficult to feel pain or discomfort.

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RESULTS AND RESPONSE

• This brochure is meant to be an educational resource and reminder to patients about the importance of diabetic foot care.

• It was well received by providers at Winooski Family Health, as well as the marketing and communications coordinators at the Community Health Centers of Burlington, as it aligned well the marketing guidelines on patient educational materials.

• Patients loved the design of the brochure and noted that it will help provide daily reminders on proper diabetic foot care.

• Brochures were put on display throughout the clinic at Winooski family health and were distributed throughout community Center of Burlington network of clinics.
EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS/LIMITATIONS

• Evaluating the effectiveness of this brochure could include a patient survey on the response to the brochure and its utility.
• Another way to evaluate the brochure, would be to interview providers to see if patient foot care management improved since the distribution of the brochure.
• In addition, a review of the number of patient foot complications since the distribution, could be a way to evaluate the effectiveness of this brochure.

Limitations:
• There was not enough time in the clerkship to collect data from surveys to assess the effectiveness of the brochure.
• Chittenden County contains a large non-English speaking refugee community, who may not find the brochure helpful or even relatable due to different cultural beliefs.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS/PROJECTS

• Translate the brochure into different languages and provide the refugee community with more access it as well as more resources that may align better with different cultures.

• Encourage medical assistants and nurses to actively distribute the brochure to all diabetic patients during initial intake office visits.

• Survey patients on barriers to proper diabetic management and foot care management over time since the distribution of the brochure.
REFERENCES

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. This project is a requirement for the Family Medicine clerkship. It will be stored on the Dana Library ScholarWorks website. Your name will be attached to your interview and you may be cited directly or indirectly in subsequent unpublished or published work. The interviewer affirms that he/she has explained the nature and purpose of this project.

The interviewee affirms that he/she has consented to this interview.

Yes __X__

Name: Dr. Charles D. MacLean

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Yes __X__

Name: Rebecca O’Reilly, MS, RD