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Evaluating the Knowledge and Practice Regarding Foot Care in Diabetes Mellitus Patients Visiting a Tertiary Care Hospital of South India

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Background: Knowledge regarding self-care practices including foot care is very vital in preventing the complications of diabetes mellitus. So, an assessment regarding the diabetes self-care in India, which is known as the diabetes capital is very crucial.

Objectives: This study aimed to assess the knowledge and practice of foot care in diabetes mellitus patients visiting a diabetes clinic associated with a tertiary care hospital in Kerala.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among diabetic patients using a pretested questionnaire to assess the knowledge and practice of diabetic patients regarding foot care. The knowledge score was classified as excellent if score >80%, and good if scored between 51 – 80%, and poor if the score was <50%. The practice score was categorized as good (>50%) and poor (<50%). Demographic details including the level of education, marital status, place of living, occupation was also collected. Descriptive and inferential statistics are performed using SPSS version 20.

Results: Among the 364 patients who completed the questionnaire, the majority (n=112, 30.76%) of respondents were between 46-55 years and the male gender was dominating (n=204, 56.0%). The majority of respondents were from urban locality 269 (73.9%) and most of them were married (88.7%). Even though a good number of the respondents 80 (22.0%) were educated, a good number of them were either unemployed or homemakers (n=218, 59.8%). A large number of respondents (58.8%) had adequate knowledge and had a poor practice of DM foot care (62.4%). Place of living (p=0.003), level of education (p<0.001), marital status (p=0.007), occupation (p < 0.001) had a statistically significant association with knowledge and practice score. The gender of the participants has no statistically significant association with foot care practices.

Conclusion: Customized patient education strategies are necessary to enhance the overall knowledge and practice to ensure the decreased incidence of diabetic foot complications.