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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Diabetic foot units in Spain: Knowing the facts using a questionnaire[☆]



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KEYWORDS

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team

Abstract

Objective: To ascertain the number of diabetic foot units (DFUs) in Spain, the specialists working in them, and the population covered by them.

Material and methods: The Spanish Group on the Diabetic Foot (SGDF) prepared and agreed a questionnaire based on the recommendations of the 2011 International Consensus on the Diabetic Foot (ICDF). From October to December 2012, the questionnaire was sent to members of three scientific societies formed by professionals involved in the care of patients with diabetes mellitus. Population coverage of the responding centers and DFUs was estimated using the 2012 population census.

Results: Seventy five questionnaires were received, 64 of them from general hospitals, which accounted for 13% of the general hospitals of the National Health System. It was calculated that

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[◇] The Spanish Group Diabetic Foot (Gepid) is a multidisciplinary group composed of members of the Spanish Society of Diabetes, whose current composition is given in Annex at end of article.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Pie diabético;
Unidad de pie
diabético;
Clínica del pie
diabético;
Equipo
multidisciplinario
de pie

they provided coverage to 43% of the population. Thirty four centers answered that they had a DFU. Specialized diabetic foot care was only provided to 25% of the population. The number of different professionals working at diabetic foot units was 6.3 ± 2.7 . Classification of DFUs based on their complexity was as follows: 5 basic units (14.7%), 20 intermediate units (58.8%), and 9 excellence units (26.5%).

Conclusions: The number of DFUs reported in this study in Spain is low, and allow for foot care of only one out of every four patients with diabetes. Spanish health system needs to improve diabetic foot care by creating new DFUs and improving the existing ones.

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Unidades de pie diabético en España: conociendo la realidad mediante el uso de un cuestionario

Resumen

Objetivo: Conocer el número de unidades de pie diabético (UPD) que existen en España, especialidades que las integran y funcionamiento, así como la cobertura poblacional de las mismas.

Material y métodos: El Grupo Español del Pie Diabético (GEPID) elaboró y consensuó un cuestionario basándose en las recomendaciones organizativas para una clínica del pie diabético propuestas por el Consenso Internacional del Pie Diabético (CIPD) 2011. El cuestionario fue enviado desde octubre a diciembre de 2012, a los miembros de 3 sociedades científicas integradas por profesionales implicados en la atención de personas con diabetes mellitus. Se estimó la cobertura poblacional de los centros respondedores y de las UPD usando el censo poblacional 2012.

Resultados: Se recibieron 75 cuestionarios, 64 de ellos procedentes de hospitales generales, que supusieron el 13% de los hospitales generales del Sistema Nacional de Salud y se estimó que daban cobertura al 43% de la población censada en España. Respondieron que existía UPD 34 centros, estimándose que daban cobertura a un 25% de la población censada. El número de diferentes profesionales que integran las UPD es de $6,3 \pm 2,7$ miembros. El análisis del tipo de UPD permitió identificar 3 modelos: mínimo 5 (14,7%), intermedio 20 (58,8%) y de excelencia 9 (26,5%).

Conclusiones: El número de UPD comunicadas en este estudio en España es escaso, permitiendo la atención como mucho de uno de cada 4 pacientes con diabetes mellitus. Se precisa mejorar la organización del cuidado del pie diabético en España, mediante la creación de UPD y mejorando las ya existentes.

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Introduction

Diabetic foot and its consequences, such as lower limb amputation (LLA), is a feared and well known complication of diabetes mellitus (DM). Diabetic foot care by multidisciplinary teams, ranging from those working in primary care to the most complex teams integrated in diabetic foot units (DFUs) where different healthcare professionals, including endocrinologists, podiatrists, surgeons (vascular, general and/or orthopedic), and diabetes educators, amongst others, are represented has been shown to decrease the LLA rate by 45–85% in the population with DM.¹

Data recently published show that the LLA rate in people with diabetes is almost double the rate in Spain as compared to countries at a similar level of development,² and that this trend is actually increasing.³ An improvement in the results of diabetic foot management is therefore a priority. On the other hand, there is no registry of Spanish DFUs or of the professionals working in them, and knowledge of these data is a key starting point for laying down the foundations for the improved management of this condition.

The Spanish Group on Diabetic Foot (SGDF) of the Spanish Diabetes Society (SED), consisting of different healthcare professionals, had in performing this study the following objectives: to examine the current situation of DFUs in Spain by ascertaining their number, the different specialists who work in them, and their operation, and in addition to estimate the population covered by these units.

Material and methods

The study was conducted by means of a questionnaire prepared and agreed by all the founding members of SGDF. The questionnaires consisted of a first part containing center data, and a second part including 12 items. The questionnaire, including open-ended answers, was intended to ascertain whether the surveyed centers had DFUs and to know their members, equipment, and functions. All items were formulated based on the recommendations for the organization of diabetic foot units proposed by the 2011 International Consensus on the Diabetic Foot (ICDF).⁴

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