

Neuropathy screening of diabetic patients in primary care in Turkey- Implementation of a new approach in primary care settings in Turkey- Training of primary care physicians and education of patients

Turgay Ongel
Acibadem Adana Hospital, Turkey

Diabetes is a serious devastating and globally spreading illness. In the historical manuscripts thousand years ago, diabetes is described as an illness which melts down of flesh and limbs into urine and it is uncontrollable. Today we know that we can manage diabetes, but we are not as optimistic as the researchers who discovered the insulin first in 1920s. Diabetes is a life-long illness and requires a comprehensive treatment approach that should be performed by primary care physicians, endocrinologists, nutritionists, nurses and psychosocial providers. Lower extremity complications in diabetic patients have become a significant public health problem in both the developed and the developing countries. These complications usually begin with neuropathy and subsequent diabetic foot wounds which leads to infection and lower extremity amputation. In order to reduce and prevent these destructive complications of diabetes, primary care physicians play a key role. In Turkey the complications of diabetes are still recognized late in the primary care settings. Ophthalmologic and renal complications are mostly screened, but the neuropathy is usually skipped. Selected primary care settings in our city - Adana have been involved in our study. The primary care physicians have been trained by the experts on screening and following the diabetic patients for neuropathy. The primary care physicians educated their diabetic patients on proper foot care. Primary care physicians used the Semmes-Weinstein monofilament test for screening neuropathy. The patients' blood glucose and glucohemoglobin have been optimized during the study. None of the patients developed serious ulceration, infection or underwent amputation.

Conclusions: Primary care physicians in Turkey should be trained on screening neuropathy in diabetic patients. -Semmes-Weinstein monofilament screening should be implemented in diabetic patient care at primary care settings. -Regular and appropriate screening of neuropathy with comprehensive care approach including optimized blood glucose, patient education and early recognition / treatment of diabetic foot will prevent from devastating consequences of diabetes.

Biography

Turgay Ongel has completed his medical education in Istanbul University School of Medicine in 1996. He completed Family Medicine residency in Cukurova University and Adana Numune Research Hospital in 2000. He is currently working as a family physician at Acibadem Hospital in Adana.

turgayongel@gmail.com