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Assessment of knowledge and practice of diabetic foot care among diabetic patients and primary care physicians at a teaching hospital, Saudi Arabia

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Objectives: To assess the knowledge and practice of primary care physicians and diabetic patients regarding diabetic foot care at a teaching hospital, Saudi Arabia.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted during December 1, 2015 to February 1, 2016 among all primary care physicians working at the primary care clinics, and 269 diabetic patients ≥ 18 years old who attended the primary care clinics at a teaching hospital. The questionnaires were developed to achieve the study objectives based on an extensive literature review. Paper based questionnaire was distributed to physicians and face to face interviews were conducted with the patients to investigate knowledge and practice regarding diabetic foot care. During interview the patients were also asked, if they have received any education about their foot care and underwent feet examination by their physicians.

Results: Among 31 physicians, 23 (74.2%) have a good knowledge and practice. Overall 269 patients, 263 (97.8%) have good knowledge and 216 (80.3%) have good practice regarding diabetic foot care. The result showed about half of the physician's 15(48.4%) claimed that they examined diabetic patients' feet who came for follow up, while only about one third of diabetic patients (35.7%) actually, underwent feet examination by their primary health care physicians. Regarding patients' advice, 30 (96.8%) of physicians claimed that they gave advice to their patients regarding diabetic foot care. On the contrary, only 85(31.6%) of the patients received advice from their physicians regarding their feet care. The study found a discrepancy between the results found from the patients and physicians regarding the practice of diabetic foot care.

Conclusion: Most of physicians had a good knowledge and practice in diabetic foot care. However, we found a discrepancy between the physicians' claims and the actual practice regarding the feet examination and patients' advice. Possibly, educational training programs about diabetic foot care for patients and physician will be beneficial to improve the diabetic foot care among the patients.

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