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Treatment of Patients with Diabetic Foot Syndrome in a Network

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Background: A network for the treatment of patients affected by a diabetic foot syndrome (DFS) coordinates the work of different specialists and the education of health care professionals. It provides for transparent structures and results. It cares for a positive and cooperative dialogue with the general practitioners. Part of this concept is a contract with insurance companies to get sufficient and quality-related payment, which completes the reorganisation of delivery of care to patients affected by the DFS. **Methods:** Treatment of DFS was documented in two processes, one for the treatment of acute disease and one for the preventive treatment. Since 2003 in Cologne and Leverkusen 15 parameters at the start and at the end of the process were documented and, in case of long duration, an intermediate result. **Results:** In the first year after start of the contract for integrated care (15.4.2005 - 31.3.2006) 367 prophylactic and 526 acute treatments were started in 603 patients. In 13 instead of expected 71 patients major amputations were required (18%). Costs could be cut down by avoiding major amputations, avoiding inpatient care, avoiding severe stages of the disease and by a cost-conscious use of resources. This resulted in a cut in costs of at least € 4.320,--for each enrolled patient with treatment of an acute DFS. **Conclusions:** Networks for the treatment of patients with DFS increase quality and save costs in the care of patients with DFS remarkably.