

Prevalence of foot ulcers among diabetic Palestinian refugee patients attending the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) clinics in Amman - Jordan

Faris G Bakri^{1,2}, Ahmad Z Qasual², Nidal Younes³, Ali Allan², Ishtaiwi Abu Zayed⁴, Kamel Ajlouni²

¹Department of Internal Medicine, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan; ²National Center for Diabetes, Endocrinology, and Genetics, Amman, Jordan; ³Department of General Surgery, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan; ⁴United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Amman, Jordan.

Background and aims: The aim of the present study was to evaluate the prevalence of foot ulcer and its associated risk factors among diabetic Palestinian refugee patients attending the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) clinics in Amman the capital city of Jordan. In Jordan, the number of refugees is huge and reaches around 2 millions. This is an economically vulnerable and dependent population with specific health care needs. The estimated prevalence of diabetes among the served population in Jordan is 10% making it a leading health problem. Data on diabetic foot ulcer among this population can be very helpful in tailoring healthcare services to avoid costly consequences. **Methods:** 1000 diabetic patients above the age of 20 years were systematically selected from the five UNRWA clinics in Amman. The patients were screened for the presence of ulcers and for associated risk factors. The study was performed in the period between Oct 2009 and March 2010. **Results:** 48% of patients were males, type 1 and type 2 diabetes were present in 3% and 97% of patients respectively, neuropathy in 15%, and foot ulcers in 1.8%. According to chi square test, foot ulcers were significantly associated with weight, body mass index, hypertension, treatment methods, neuropathy, intermittent claudication, and duration of diabetes. **Conclusion:** This is the first study examining the prevalence of foot ulcers and risk factors in refugees in Jordan. The prevalence of foot ulcers here is comparable to other community based studies in developed countries. However, the complications of diabetic foot ulcers such as amputation and infection in such population with poor resources can be even more devastating. Therefore, every effort should be made to prevent this complication.