

P42

Self-rated health (SRH) in patients with chronic foot ulcers and diabetes.

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The causes of chronic foot ulcers are multiple. It is not known how much the patient mental health affects the wound healing. Several studies have shown that SRH is a better predictor of morbidity and mortality than many well-known laboratory analyses. The aim of this study was to increase the understanding how SRH in patients may affect factors of importance for wound healing.

Material: In a pilot study of 23 patients, 12 men and 11 women were randomly selected at the foot clinic. The patients gave their informed consent to the study. Mean duration of diabetes was 24 years, mean age 65 years and mean duration of foot ulcers were 14 months. Methods: Inquires were sent out to patients at the foot clinic, Karolinska University Hospital, regarding quality of life, SRH, coping, physical activity. Blood was given for analysis of cortisol, IGF-I and IGFBP-1, HbA1c and CRP. Result: 55% of the patients rated their health well or rather well. However, the women rated their health worse than men did. We found a correlation between increased HbA1c, IGFBP-1 and CRP as well as low IGF-I with poor SRH. Conclusion: There is an association between SRH and factors of importance for wound healing. Poor rated health could be an effect of increased inflammation, catabolism and stress on one hand or be the cause of poor metabolic control, catabolism and stress on the other hand. We suggest that measures should be taken to improve the self rated health in patients with chronic foot ulcers and diabetes.