

## Patients Perceptions of a Shoe Fitting Service at a Diabetic Foot Clinic

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Long standing diabetes is often associated with foot deformity. If incorrectly managed with ill fitting footwear, high pressure can lead to ulceration, infection and amputation. The provision of good individualised hospital made foot wear is therefore an important component of the armamentarium offered by a foot clinic. However, adherence to wearing the footwear provided is highly dependent on a variety of factors. We wanted to assess how the service we provided was perceived by the patients. Two questionnaires were undertaken, in 2001 and 2010. Patients were asked a series of questions relating to the number of interactions with the shoe fitting service, how many pairs of shoes they had received, how often they wore them indoors and out of doors. They were also asked about their experience with the shoe fitters, in particular whether they found the experience acceptable, whether the shoes were acceptable, how long they had to wait for their shoes, and if they had a choice of colour and style. Patients were also asked if they were provided with sufficient information prior to referral to the shoe fitting service and from the shoe fitters themselves. The results showed that of the 100 patients surveyed in 2001, 45 people replied (45%). In 2010, 71 of the 124 people invited replied (57%). In 2001, 87% had two or more pairs of shoes, with that being 83% in 2010 with most people wearing all the shoes they were issued with. In addition, in 2010 91% of shoes were provided within 1 month of assessment. In both surveys, most patients (57% in 2001, and 63% in 2010) wore their shoes indoors, with 81% reporting no problems with their shoes at all in both surveys. In both surveys, over 95% of patients felt they had been given sufficient information by the podiatrists prior to referral to the shoe fitting service, and had been given sufficient information by the shoe fitting service as well.

The range of colours offered had increased in the clinic and this was reflected by the increase in responses when asked if they had been offered a choice from 89% in 2001 to 99% in 2010. In both surveys 96% of respondents rated their experience with the shoe fitting service as either 'very good' or 'excellent'.

In summary, our single centre experience using an excellent shoe fitting service has consistently high levels of patient satisfaction. These results show that having such a service is essential to a foot clinic aspiring to excellent clinical outcomes with low recurrence rates. We are currently auditing our results.