

Assessing the economic impact of a podiatrist - analysis of clinic activity after temporary loss of 50% of the podiatrists from a tertiary specialist foot clinic

C Gooday, R Murchison, K Dhatariya. Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, Norwich, UK

Introduction: Podiatrists form an integral part of the multidisciplinary foot team, however, their importance is often overlooked by purchasers of specialist services. A set of unforeseen circumstances within our specialist diabetes foot service meant that we lost 50% of our podiatry team within a few days for 6 months. Some of this time was filled by non-specialist community podiatrists. **Methods:** We assessed the economic impact of this loss by examining data for the 5 years prior to this 6 month interruption, & for the 2 years after 'normal service' was resumed.

Results:	Clinic Activity	N ^o of Admissions	% of Total Activity	Total Bed Days	Mean Length of Hospital Stay (\pm SD)	
2005	2835	30	1	515	17.2 (9.2)	
2006	2921	43	1.5	775	17.2 (19.2)	
2007	3325	39	1.1	570	14.6 (11.3)	
2008	4197	50	1.2	919	18.4 (16.8)	
2009	4799	58	1.2	867	14.7 (11.3)	Year
2010	4058	72	1.8	1194	16.5 (12.3)	of
2011	4294	41	0.95	838	20.4 (16.6)	interruption
2012	5270	45	0.89	733	16.2 (15.1)	

Our data shows that the loss of the podiatrists led to a significant rise in the numbers of admissions into hospital. At our institution a single bed day cost is €280. In the first month after the cut in service, we had 8 extra admissions, accounting for a total of 132 extra bed days. This equates to €37056. During the 12 months the extra costs increased by a total of €113840. Had the community help not been available, & admission rates stayed the same for the year, estimated costs would have risen to €422850. Our data does not look at the costs saved from avoiding surgery (currently set at €11800 for major amputations). Thus the actual costs incurred are likely to be higher **Conclusions:** The annual salary of a senior podiatrist in the UK is set at €43580, thus they more than pay for themselves.