

Title: Establishing a diabetic foot clinic in The Gambia

Background

Type 2 diabetes is now a major disease burden amongst young adults in The Gambia affecting 1.4% (rural) - 8.6% (urban) of the population. Complications are extremely common and affect family bread winners; also it is the second highest cause of morbidity and mortality.

Objectives

Improve the management of the diabetic foot to reduce the large number of amputations being resorted to in the advanced disease complications in young adults.

Method

Local funds are insufficient for many of the UK treatments/modern dressings. Many interventions to reduce the complications of diabetes are low cost and available even in health facilities with minimal resources. The emphasis was to improve/establish equitable preventative health care and patient education rather than expensive technology. Much can be achieved with an accurate foot assessment to classify the "risk category", recording the findings, basic wound care, weight control, exercise and dietary management.

High adult illiteracy (62.2%) necessitates the development of informative, diagrammatic posters helping patients understand the warning signs of foot problems thus encouraging early attendance at clinics before conditions deteriorate.

Summary

Setting up a diabetic foot assessment clinic and recording the findings at the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital, The Gambia will enable the nurses to actively target the High risk patients. It will also provide a basis for a national policy to ensure preventative and curative services are provided in an equitable and cost effective way encouraging patients to seek help sooner rather than latter, thus reducing mortality of the bread winners and be economic benefit to The Gambia.