

# Knowledge and practice of foot care and examination among individuals with diabetes in rural Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

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## Background

- Lower limb amputation (LLA) is a significant public health and socio-economic challenge.
- Diabetes mellitus (DM) is one of the leading causes of lower limb amputation.
- LLA is largely preventable following adequate foot care practices, healthy lifestyles and vascular care

## Aim

- To assess the knowledge and practice of foot care and examination among individuals living with DM in rural Eastern Cape, South Africa.

## Methods

**Design:** A descriptive, exploratory qualitative study.

**Setting:** A selected rural community in Eastern Cape, South Africa.

**Participants:** 13 individuals living with DM (8 non-amputees and 5 amputees) and 2 community representatives.

**Recruitment:** Participants were recruited through community contacts or from an operation database using purposive sampling.

**Data collection:** Face-to-face, semi-structured individual interviews.

**Data analysis:** Inductive content analysis.

## Results

- Participants included 10 females and 5 males and age ranged from 53-73 years.
- Participants were not aware of the importance of foot care and examination.
- The few that had undergone foot examination were unaware of the importance.
- Some had the misperception that foot examination was only needed if they had symptoms.

*"I do not know at all that there is a need to go for foot examination because I was never told that I should go to check my feet and they [my feet] have never been checked"*

*Yes, I have my foot examined when I visit a private doctor. He normally do like a complete check up for me including my feet though he doesn't mention why he is checking my feet"*

Knowledge and practice of foot care

*"No, I don't check my foot or go for foot examination. I didn't know I was supposed to check. I didn't know at all"*

*"No, I don't check my feet unless I feel some hotness. I don't have anything on my feet or legs, I don't have a wound or nothing I am fine it"*

## Discussion

- Knowledge and practice of foot care and examination among individuals living with DM in this setting was low.
- Interventions and community engagement programmes aimed to improve foot care knowledge among individuals living with DM in rural areas are required to reduce LLA incidence.