

Amputation of the Foot or Toe

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Abstract

Keywords: Diabetic foot; Mortality; Toe amputation; Ulcer

Introduction

Toe amputation surgery removes a toe, foot, or part of a foot. As a result of the relentless increase in the prevalence of diabetes mellitus (DM) in Africa, a corresponding rise in diabetes complications is expected. The International Diabetes Federation and World Health Organization jointly warn that these complications, if unchecked would threaten the viability of many African nations [1]. With diabetes prevalence of 5.7%, Nigeria is currently home to about 5 million adults living with diabetes. Diabetes appears to be a tip of the iceberg as it is estimated that about two-thirds of diabetes cases in Nigeria are yet undiagnosed. Consequent upon this high prevalence of chronic undetected hyperglycemia, many individuals with diabetes present with already established chronic complications at the time of diagnosis [2].

One potentially preventable complication of diabetes that is associated with high morbidity and mortality is diabetic foot ulcer (DFU). It is estimated that a person with diabetes has up to 25% chance of developing DFU in his/her lifetime [3]. The burden of DFU is high both in Africa generally, and in Nigeria in particular. A recent update suggests that nearly 2 out of every 10 out-patients with diabetes in Nigeria have diabetic foot disease, and DFU accounts for nearly a third of diabetes-related hospital admissions [4]. Diabetic foot ulcer is associated with prolonged hospital stay, substantial economic burden and high mortality. Perhaps the most unpleasant potential consequence of DFU besides death is lower extremity amputation (LEA) [5].

More than three-quarters of all LEAs performed in people with diabetes is secondary to DFU which is currently the leading cause of non-trauma related LEA globally. The negative medical and psychosocial consequences of LEA in people with DM are substantial [6]. About 10% of those who suffer major LEAs die intra-admission. And post LEA survivors have a significantly reduced quality of life and higher risk of depression which may be related to impaired psychosocial functioning [7]. The long term prognosis after DFU-related LEA is also reportedly abysmal, with 3-year mortality after diabetic foot amputation ranging from 35 to 50%. In fact, long term prognosis after major LEAs in people with diabetes has been shown to be comparable to breast and prostate

*Corresponding author:

Received:

Revised:

Citation:

Copyright:

Editor assigned:

Reviewed:

Published:

Infection

Blood clots

Skin breakdown and swelling of the remaining body part

Poor healing that may result in further amputation

Feeling pain in the amputated foot or toe or feeling that it is still there

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Smoking

Drinking

Chronic diseases, such as diabetes or obesity

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