

## **ABSTRACT**

### **A study of diabetic patients and their knowledge of the importance of foot care in the prevention of foot problems in St.Catherine, Jamaica**

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The biggest fear of every diabetic patient is amputation of the lower limb. The literature review revealed that much of the morbidity, disability and death among diabetic patients resulted from complications due to lack of proper foot care.

This study analysed the data obtained from 105 patients who attended the St. Jago Park health clinic during March 6th to April 3rd, 1998. Questionnaires and docket information were used to collect the data. The age distribution in the sample ranged from 28 - 82 years with a mean and standard deviation of age being  $60.41 \pm 11.21$  years.

The data revealed that the patients with a minority of exceptions, had a good knowledge of foot care. The knowledge scores ranged from 6 - 12 with a mean score of 10.68. There were three patients with foot problems. One male with an ulcer who had a score of six, another with an amputation who also had a similar score and one female with an amputation but having a score of twelve. There was

a particularly low knowledge score with regard to 'use of lotion between the toes' and 'exposing foot to very hot or cold'.

In this study sample, foot problems did not have a high prevalence (2.9%). However, the education process must become an integral part in the life of every diabetic patient so that they will understand the need to have healthy practices in order to experience optimum health.