

# The growing costs and consequences of diabetic foot ulcers



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**D**iabetic foot ulcers (DFU) are one of the most feared complications in diabetes. Neuropathy and ischaemia are two common pathologies of the foot in patients with diabetes, which can lead to the typical features of foot ulceration and Charcot neuroarthropathy. Secondary infection can eventually result in amputation (minor or major) and increased mortality. All of these features contribute to considerable clinical and economic burden.

The global prevalence of DFUs varies from 3% to 13% worldwide (Table 1), with a global average of 6.4%. Diabetic foot ulceration has an annual incidence of 2% to 5%, whereas the lifetime risk of developing a DFU is between 19% and 34% (Lu et al, 2020). Unfortunately, even after successful wound healing, recurrence is common. Approximately 40% of patients have a recurrence within one year, almost 60% within three years, and 65% within five years of healing (Edmonds et al, 2001).

The cost of care for DFUs has become a global economic burden. Mean cost per patient-year was the US \$3368 (ulcer-only), US \$10468 (minor amputation), and US \$30131 (major amputation). Diabetic patients with foot complications (32.3%) spent four times more than patients without complications (9.3%) of their total income (Shobhana et al, 2000).

However better awareness of preventing, recognising, and properly treating DFUs and other diabetic wounds can make all the difference.

D-Foot International is a global organisation promoting the global profile of diabetic foot prevention and care through awareness, guidance, education, research, and professional development. Our mission is:

*“Ending avoidable lower-limb amputations due to diabetes worldwide.”*

Connecting members from seven regions of the world: Africa (AFR), Europe (EUR), Middle East and North Africa (MENA), North America and the Caribbean (NAC), South and Central America (SACA), South East Asia (SEA) and the Western

Table 1. Prevalence of diabetic foot ulcer in different countries – selected data from a recent systematic review (IDF, 2017)

Country	Number of studies	Prevalence
Belgium	1	16.6%
Canada	1	14.8%
USA	3	13.0%
India	2	11.6%
Thailand	2	8.8%
Pakistan	4	7.4%
Pacific island countries	1	6.8%
UK	4	6.3%
Bahrain	1	5.9%
Jordan	2	4.2%
China	10	4.1%
Japan	1	2.0%
Korea	2	1.7%

Pacific regions we aim to achieve our mission.

My earnest appreciation to the Vice President of D-Foot International, Prof. Harikrishna K.R. Nair, for being the Editor-in-Chief of this important journal *Wounds Asia*. This journal highlights the issue of Wounds and the challenges faced by health care specialists and wound care experts in Asia.

As the President of D-Foot International I wish the journal all success in achieving its mission and I am sure this will be possible in the hands of the Editor-In-Chief Prof Harikrishna Nair. **WAS**

## Reference

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