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Is it important for a GP to know dermatological signs of type 2 diabetes?

Pierre Frances, A Poya, M Neil, T Jean-Eudes

(1) GP, University of Montpellier, France

(2) GP, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

(3) GP, University of York, UK

(4) Intern, University of Montpellier, France

Corresponding author: Dr Frances Pierre, Wonca, Pyrennes Orientales, Banyuls sur Mer, France. E-mail: frances.pierre@wanadoo.fr

Background and Aim: Diabetes mellitus is an ever increasing problem throughout the world. It affects more than 350 million people. Consequently, we wished to study how skin disorders are linked with diabetes in a primary care setting. Our main aim consists in discovering the frequency of cutaneous signs, and show if it is important for a GP to search them.

Method: A quantitative, observational unicentred study was undertaken in a city with a population of 5,000. The study was performed over a three month period between June and August 2015. During this period, we saw 1,916 patients, and 213 suffered from type 2 diabetes.

Results: Most of the type 2 diabetes patients were older than 50 years (91.6%). for 20.7%, of the patients' type 2 diabetes had been diagnosed within the last 10 years. We found more men (55.9%), than women (44.1%) to have the condition. 50.7% of patients have HBA1C equal or under 7%. in regard to medications, 37% took a prescription of a Biguanides. The most representative signs we noticed were: diabetic dermopathy (17.4%), finger pebbles (6.6%), necrosis lipoidica diabeticorum (2.8%), acanthosis nigricans (2.3%), scleroderma-like change (1.9%), scleroderma of Buschke (1.4%), diabetic bullae (1.4%).

Conclusion: Type 2 diabetes is and will be very important to search in developed countries. Our study permits to light the importance of cutaneous signs in this disease because 11.1% of patients with diabetes had representative cutaneous signs linked with this disorder. One fifth of patients aged between 18-74 do not know the have diabetes. By examining for cutaneous signs some diabetic cases could be diagnosed sooner, and patients life and treatments could be improved.