

Press Release

Diabetic Foot is Better Taken Care of in Networks

Health insurance representatives recommend extension of network treatment

Cologne, September 14th 2011 – The closer the connection between physicians, medical care, specialized chiropodists and orthopaedic shoemakers – the better and more efficient is the patient care. This was the conclusion by more than 175 representatives of German foot networks on Saturday, who had met on the national workshop “7. Nationaler Workshop Netzwerke Diabetischer Fuß“ for diabetic foot networks following an invitation of the project group AG Netzwerke by the project group AG Fuß of the German diabetes society DDG. Representatives of the health insurances, who have contracts with networks, advice the service providers to further pursue the successful path and to connect through functioning foot networks such as in North Rhine.

“In North Rhine we have developed care possibilities for the diabetic foot together with the sponsors and indeed we succeeded with an enormous leap in quality”, reported Dr. Dirk Hochlenert, co-founder of the networks diabetic foot in North Rhine. „Still we also need insurances to improve the medical care sustainably. There are signals that insurers will also offer broad support in the future and this gives us great hope.”

In North Rhine the major amputation rates could be lowered to an average of two percent from over five percent due to the established foot network there and the connected IV-contracts. A success, which essentially is owed to the close networking of all actors participating in the treatment.

In the meantime, an interdisciplinary working team “healthy shoes” was founded during the workshop in Cologne. Physicians, podologists and orthopaedic shoemakers want to formulate the characteristics, which represent a healthy shoe. Especially in the years before the progression of a diabetic foot, the right footwear is one of the most important methods to prevent deformity of the feet. This early prevention is an important and so far little noticed chapter, said the Cologne podologist Ulrike Karabas.

Dr. Alexander Risse, head of the diabetes center at the Hospital Dortmund, praised the numerous progresses, but at the same time emphasized that Germany is far away from a covering network. With the support of the Medical Data Institute Risse had founded the expert group “Diabetic Foot Syndrome” nine months ago. The group announced in August that they were setting up a Germany-wide data register about the DFS following the model of the diabetic foot network “Netzwerk Diabetischer Fuß Köln und Umgebung” in Cologne and surrounding area – in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Ursula Hübner, director of the research group for informatics within the healthcare system at the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück.

Dr. Gerald Engels, foot surgeon and chairman of the Netzwerk Diabetischer Fuß Köln und Umgebung e.V., concludingly said: “Not least the signals of the health insurances attest us to carry on with our pursued course and to campaign for the extensive expansion of foot networks also beyond the borders of North Rhine.”

About the diabetic foot syndrome (DFS)

The Diabetic Foot Syndrome is a wound healing disorder initiated by diabetic neuropathy. In case of an additional poor blood circulation the courses get to some extent dramatic. In Germany about 300,000 people with diabetes type 1 or 2 suffer from the subsequent disease diabetic foot syndrome (DFS). Because this sickness is often unrecognized or wrongly treated, the complication rate is extremely high: 28,000 amputations are connected to the diabetic foot syndrome in Germany every year. Approx. 90 percent of the patients over 75 years die due to the consequences.

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