Management of new diabetic foot ulcer during COVID-19 Pandemic

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Aim: Diabetic foot ulcer (DFU) is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in the world. Early referral to multidisciplinary diabetic foot clinics can decrease progression of disease, but Covid-19 Pandemic is changing our approaches and our health care organization.The aim of this study was to evaluate the clinical characteristics and outcomes for subjects with new diabetic foot ulcer admitted at our clinic during year 2020

Method: We analized retrospectively 199 patients with diabetic foot ulcer presenting at diabetic foot visit from February 2020 to December 2020.We identified 59 patients with new diabetic foot ulcer, but 6 patients were excluded from study because lost to follow-up.All participants after the first outpatient visit or hospitalization had regular clinical follow-up.Healing, major amputation, death and rate of COVID-19 infection were evaluated.

Results / Discussion: The mean age was 75.8 ±11.9 years, 40.7% patients were over 80 years,63% were male and 93% had type 2 diabetes,mean HbA1c was 7.68±1.8%.Among patients included, 35.6% were admitted for emergency and 72.9% reported previous ulcers. The mean ulcer duration was 29.9 ± 30.4 days. Most DFUs were infected (61.2%),deep to muscle, tendon or bone and over half (52.5%) were ischemic.Hypertension (74.6%), end-stage renal disease (47.7%) and ischemic heart disease (34.5%) were the most frequent comorbidities.Thirty-three (62.2%) patients healed, 10 (18.9%) had a minor amputation, while 2 (3.8%) had a major amputation and 9 (15%) patients died due to cardiac complications.

Conclusion: The spread of SARS-CoV-2 in Italy has changed the organization of health care systems dramatically, but our data show that patients with new lesions are elderly and unfortunately 30.5% of them had an ulcer for over a month.DFU cannot wait and even during the COVID-19 pandemic we must treat the ulcer early if we are to increase the likelihood of healing and reduce the rate of amputation.