

A systematic review and individual patient data meta-analysis of prognostic factors for foot ulceration in people with diabetes: the international research collaboration for the prediction of diabetic foot ulcerations (PODUS)

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Plain English summary

Prognostic factors for foot ulceration in people with diabetes

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Annual foot risk assessment of people with diabetes is recommended in national and international clinical guidelines. At present, these assessments are based on opinion and agreements among health-care professionals and are not based on all available data. We sought to review all available data using individual patient data to find out which risk factors most reliably identified people with diabetes who are at risk of foot ulceration.

We searched electronic databases for published studies and sought depersonalised data from the researchers of previous studies, and obtained copies of data from individual patients. These data were collected from more than 16,000 people with diabetes worldwide and reanalysed by us.

The analyses show that a simple-to-use and cheap test, the 10-g monofilament test, most consistently identifies those people with diabetes who are at risk of foot ulceration, regardless of if they are at low, moderate or high risk of ulceration. Foot pulses are also cheap, easy to do and predictive, although less consistently so. Diabetes foot risk assessments are more likely to be completed in clinical practice if they are easy to do. These findings could inform UK and international guidelines to ensure that people with diabetes receive cost-effective foot health care as part of their annual health assessment.

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