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| Title | Systematic Reviews for Podiatry |
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| Reference | VA Technology Assessment Program Brief Overview, November, 2009. www.va.gov/VATAP/docs/Podiatryupgrade2010.pdf |

Aim

To review the effectiveness of interventions for foot care, ie, diabetic foot wounds, nail care, and callus debridement.

Conclusions and results

Thirty-seven reviews met the inclusion criteria, 23 of which addressed diabetic foot care. The remaining 14 articles addressed other topics in foot care. Two themes emerged: 1) the evidence base did not support definitive conclusions on the efficacy of many podiatry interventions, and 2) there were few reliably effective strategies for diabetic foot ulcers, although new technologies such as skin replacement and growth factors seem promising. All reviews were abstracted in this Brief.

Methods

Articles in English published between 1990 and 2009 were searched in the following databases: Cochrane Library, PubMed, and INAHTA. Search terms used were “foot care”, “systematic review”, and “meta-analysis”. Included were systematic reviews, HTA, guidelines, or economic evaluations in English that synthesized primary research in adult human subjects (or adults separately analyzed within a larger population) that were published or updated since 2000 and addressed interventions used in ambulatory podiatric primary care or for which primary care podiatrists are likely to refer patients. Podiatry Service reviewed a draft list of interventions to be covered and confirmed applicability to its needs.

Further research/reviews required

More rigorously conducted and transparently reported research is urgently needed. Sixteen of the 179 ongoing “foot health” clinical trials will shed light on the review topics in this Brief.