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The use of telemedicine in diabetic foot care

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One of the late complications of diabetes is diabetic foot syndrome (DFS), characterized by reduction in blood supply to the feet that leads to neuropathy and angiopathy. DFS patients are at risk of developing foot ulcers and wounds as a result of neuropathy. The care of individuals with diabetic foot ulcers is often expensive and requires multiple Hospital visits most of the times. Inadequate care leads to serious complications and a high risk of lower extremity amputation. The role of telemedical monitoring in diabetic foot ulcer care remains still uncertain. The objective of this systematic review of the literature was to assess the effect of telemedicine in the prevention and treatment of diabetic foot ulcers. This systematic review included research studies published in the 2008-2018 period from search databases Medline, Scopus, CINAHL and PubMed with index words diabetic foot, diabetic foot ulcers, telemedicine. Eighteen studies were reviewed and evaluated. Most of them showed that the telemedical intervention can effectively support the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers and monitor every change of the ulcer as the agreement for remote vs in-person assessment of the ulcers were in most studies quite high. Moreover, in many of the included studies, both Healthcare professionals and patients that used the telemedical devices reported their satisfaction of the intervention and that they were quite easy to use. The feasibility studies that were reviewed, showed that the telemedical intervention is cost effective in comparison with the cost for foot ulcer or amputation treatment in the national Health system which is estimated between 5,000\$ and 40,000\$. Telemedicine care is promising for the management of diabetic foot patients as the results of the included studies were comparable with usual care. In conclusion, there is a need for large multicenter studies so that safe conclusions can be drawn about the usefulness and effectiveness of the telemedicine in this specific group of patients.

Biography

Anastasia P Papachristou has completed her studies in the Kapodistrian University of Athens in the field of Robotic Surgery and in the Management & Administration of Health Units. Her field of expertise is International Medicine and Health Crisis management. She has participated in numerous missions with international organizations globally and she has been granted several awards both for her academic and humanitarian action.

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