

Abstract

Title of abstract: The development, implementation, and evaluation of a social media-based patient diabetic foot self-management education and support program in Canada: A multimethod feasibility study.

Name: Helen Obilor

Academic institution affiliation: PhD student at Queen's University of Regina),

Doctoral program stage: Thesis writeup

Background: Diabetic foot ulcer (DFU) is a costly complication associated with excessive disability and mortality. Most diabetic foot care education programs are didactic and limited in providing the ongoing empowerment vital to reducing DFU incidence. The advancement in social media offers an innovative approach to empowering patients to prevent DFU.

Aim: This study aimed to determine the feasibility of social media as an alternative method to engage people with diabetes (PWD) in DFU prevention in Canada.

Methods: A multimethod approach was utilized to develop, implement, and evaluate a social media DFU prevention-based intervention. The study intervention development and implementation phase involved a scoping review and participatory design that included healthcare professionals (HCP) and PWD. The evaluative phase entailed a partially randomized preference trial and interpretive description. Data collection involved a validated questionnaire administered through QualtricsXM survey software at baseline, one, and three-month post-intervention with a telephone interview.

Result: A peer-led diabetic foot-based self-management education and support program named Diabetic foot Care Group (DFCG) on Facebook was developed for the daily empowerment of PWD. The intervention covered ten education topics with eight support/engagement activities categories. Thirty-two PWD were enrolled to evaluate DFCG health impact. The DFCG acceptability and efficacy rates were 84.2% and 88.9%, respectively. The participants had a positive learning experience and social interactions in DFCG. Five themes emerged to describe how DFCG helped participants change their foot self-care practice - in-depth knowledge, perceived susceptibility, sense-making, informed decision, and self-motivation.

Conclusion: The study results indicated that social media is a feasible platform for the engagement of PWD in DFU prevention. DFCG was associated with improved PWD foot self-care efficacy, foot self-care adherence, community resources awareness, communication with HCP, foot health, and physical health status. Therefore, HCP should utilize social media as a virtual option for patient education and support programs.