



BHPR RESEARCH: QUANTITATIVE

116 RESULTS OF A NATIONAL FOOT HEALTH SURVEY OF PATIENTS WITH SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS

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Background: SLE can affect many tissues throughout the body. Anecdotally, it is suggested that people with SLE experience a range of complications in the foot and lower limb, including vascular impairment (e.g. RP), neurological impairment, poor tissue viability (e.g. ulceration), infection and foot pain. However, to date, the precise prevalence of foot complications experienced by people with SLE has not been described. The aim of this survey was to determine self-reported foot and lower limb complications experienced by people with SLE.

Methods: The survey was developed via patient and practitioner focus groups. A consensus approach was used to generate items and to formulate themes, categories, question format and survey structure. The survey was checked for face and content validity prior to cognitive debriefing to ensure usability and understanding. Consecutive patients with a confirmed diagnosis of SLE meeting the inclusion criteria attending any of seven UK clinical sites or members of Lupus UK were invited to participate. Ethical approval and participant informed consent was obtained.

Results: A total of 182 survey responses were completed. For all responders, the most frequent age range was 40–49 years, mean BMI was 27 (s.d. 7) and mean disease duration was 15 years (s.d. 10). A number of vascular complications were reported, including intermittent claudication [$n = 100$ (55%)], RP [$n = 94$ (52%)] and splinter haemorrhage [$n = 39$ (21%)]. Overall, 164 patients (90%) reported experiencing symptoms of peripheral vascular complications. Symptoms of peripheral neuropathy were reported by 30 patients (16%), while a fall as a consequence of neuropathic symptoms was reported by 45 patients (25%). A range of skin and nail complications were reported, including callus or corns [$n = 130$ (71%)], onychocryptosis [$n = 69$ (38%)], rashes or blistering [$n = 62$ (34%)] and ulceration [$n = 45$ (25%)]. A high prevalence of infection was reported; a history of viral infection (verrucae pedis) or fungal infection (tinea pedis) was

reported by 77 patients (42%), bacterial infection by 28 patients (15%) and onychomycosis by 65 patients (36%). Overall, 170 patients (93%) reported having experienced some form of tissue viability complication. Foot joint pain, stiffness and swelling was reported by 145 (80%), 136 (75%) and 94 (52%) patients, respectively. Foot-related walking impairment was reported by 67 patients (37%). Only 60 patients (33%) reported having ever been asked about their feet by a medical professional. Seventy-seven patients (42%) reported that they would benefit from the provision of general foot health care advice.

Conclusion: A large number of people with SLE report vascular complications, impaired tissue viability, musculoskeletal problems and foot pain, as well as a range of infections and conditions of the skin and nails. Despite this, foot health assessment by professionals was infrequent. These results highlight the need to undertake clinical studies investigating lower limb pathologies in SLE.

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