

When off-loading becomes a burden

A scoping review of qualitative studies exploring the experiences of psychological distress among podiatrists and other health care professionals.

Silva Cochrane

Senior Podiatrist – South Tees Hospital Foundation Trust

What is the problem?



Increase in patients living with long term conditions and their complications.



Significant strain on the NHS and those involved in their care.



Relationships can last for years and can create many challenges



Recent evidence suggests patients often rely on clinicians for psychological support



Clinicians not adequately equipped to provide this type of support



Can lead to psychological distress, burnout and workforce challenges.



The Aim

- To understand the experiences of psychological distress among Podiatrists and other Healthcare Professionals (HCP's) who treat and manage patients with long term chronic health conditions, including diabetes, and their complications including ulcers and non healing wounds.

Methods



Scoping
review



Developed
search strategy
with health
librarian



Searched 5
databases
(Medline,
CINAHL, AMED,
Psychinfo, Google
scholar) between
2004-2024



Only included
Qualitative
studies



Analysed
using
thematic
synthesis
approach



Used SURE
checklist to
assess quality of
each article
selected.

Results



4 Themes



Theme 1 – Feeling like a failure

I really feel that I was failing people, you keep giving and then you sometimes don't see the results

It's like a failure, sort of... I mean, they're helped and their wounds were supposed to heal ...but I couldn't save this one

Theme 2 – Emotional involvement with patient and their families

although you are told not to get emotionally involved with these patients, I think it is impossible

I've cried so much for patients who died, I try not to let those emotions out in the room or during my shift, I wait until I get home

Theme 3 – Feeling relied upon for psychological support

We're not psychologists,
it's not what we're here for,
we're here to treat the leg
ulcer

You can't take it ... they
rely on you so much
when you get there and
then, it's like they want an
own nurse who's
everything to them

Theme 4 – Barriers and facilitators to coping

We had to sort of share the misery among the team; otherwise you end up getting depressed yourself. It was an ordeal. You spend an hour with the patient and it is such an ordeal

I feel mentally tired at not being able to help the patient, I don't have enough time or the capacity to help

Implications



Managing patients with long term conditions can lead to emotional distress of HCP's



Continued exposure to patients pain and suffering can result in HCP's feeling like a failure and subsequent compassion fatigue



Long term relationships built up with patients can be beneficial but also detrimental



We should be supported to cope with this burden



We should be equipped to assist our patients



Further research is needed to understand how we can best be supported.

Acknowledgements

NIHR/Sheffield Hallam University

Lara Chapman (Mentor)

Harrogate and District Foundation
Trust

Hilary O'Callaghan (Health Librarian
Harrogate Hospital)

South Tees NHS Trust

References

- 1. Drgac D, Himmelsbach R. Acts of negotiation: toward a grounded theory of nursing in chronic wound care in Austria. *BMC Health services Research* 2023 (23)
- 2. Eskilsson C, Carlsson G. Feeling confident in burdensome yet enriching care: Community nurses describe the care of patients with hard-to-heal wounds. *International Journal of Qualitative studies in Health and Wellbeing* 2010 (5)
- 3. Garcia E, Ortega-Galan A, Ibanez-Masero O, Ramos-Pichardo J, Fernandez-leyva A, Ruizfernandez M. Qualitative study on the causes and consequences of compassion fatigue from the perspective of nurses. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing* 2021 (30)
- 4. Morgan P, Moffatt C. Non healing leg ulcers and the nurse-patient relationship. Part 2: the nurse's perspective. *International Wound Journal* 2008 5 (2).
- 5. Ondrejкова N, Halamova J. Qualitative analysis of compassion fatigue and coping strategies among nurses. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences* 2022 (9)
- 6. Tierney S, Seers K, Tutton E, Reeve J. Enabling the flow of compassionate care: a grounded theory study. *BMC Health Services Research* 2017 (17)
- 7. Varga M, Holloway S. The lived experience of the wound care nurse in caring for patients with pressure ulcers. *International Wound Journal* 2014 R