

2025

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TITLE Consensus on the provision of patient education for adults with diabetes-related foot ulceration: a Delphi study of Australian stakeholders

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ABSTRACT (maximum 450 words. Please use the following or similar headings: Background/Methods/Results/Conclusions)

Background

Diabetes-related foot ulceration (DFU) is a significant public health challenge, affecting a substantial proportion of the global diabetes population. DFU is a leading cause of disability, hospitalisation, and lower limb amputation. While international guidelines for ulcer prevention exist, there is a lack of high-quality evidence on the most effective educational strategies for people with active DFU. Therefore, this study aims to reach consensus on the key elements and optimal delivery of patient education for adults newly diagnosed with DFU and for those with recurrent or long-standing DFU, incorporating perspectives from both consumers and health experts.

Methods

A modified four-round Delphi online survey design sought input from (i) health experts (Australian registered healthcare professionals with at least three years of DFU management experience and/or researchers/academics with specialised knowledge in DFU) and (ii) consumers (Australian residents with lived experience of DFU or their carers) regarding essential components of patient education for active DFU, focusing on timing, content, and delivery methods. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data was analysed by inductive thematic analysis by two independent assessors.

Results

After Round 1, a total of 54 unique responses (48 elements of education and 6 methods of delivery) were proposed by participants (including 99 health professionals and 39 consumers). Of those participants, 17 consumers and 73 health experts completed Round 2. Nine themes emerged from the elements of education proposed in Round 1: Wound aetiology, Wound management, Pressure offloading, Complications, Escalation, Quality of life, Holistic management, Foot self-care and Long term management. Six modes of education delivery were also identified. Results of Round 3 and 4 will be finalised in October 2025 and will be presented at the upcoming conference.

Conclusions

This research addresses a critical gap in DFU education, aligning clinical practices with patient needs and international guidelines. The findings will support the development of evidence-based, consistent, unbiased, and patient-centred educational resources. Over time, these resources are expected to drive improvements in both patient- and service-related outcomes. The findings are expected to have broad implications, potentially influencing healthcare policy and clinical practice both within Australia and internationally.