Diabetic foot syndrome (DFS) in Germany

A market analysis towards comprehensive integrated care for statutory health fund members of AOK Nordost

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SUBJECT

DFS is one of the most neglected major complications associated with diabetes. In 1989 the World Health Or- ganisation (WHO) called for a reduction by half in the rate of lower limb amputations as a consequence of diabetic gangrene. To date, in the state of Branden- burg - as in many other German states and other parts of the world - DFS care is still seriously inadequate lea- ding to increased health service expenses.

With proper treatment, with the exception of DFS grade 5, all DFS grades of severity can be reduced to DFS grade 0 .

RESEARCH AND PLANNING OF CARE

Market analysis: Towards an assessment of more efficient regional care

The Goal: Drastically reduce the rate of lower limb amputations and foot complications in the medium term following evaluation of hospital expense data in 2002, the AOK Scientific Institute (WAO) was able for the first time to estimate an annual figure in Germany of 20,000 lower limb amputations of diabetic patients. The Social Code Book V (SGB V) permits Health Insurers to use routine data for the optimi- zation of integrated care contracts, including quality and cost effectiveness checks. An anonymous analysis of 569 inpatients in 2006 determined 650 cases of diagnosed diabetes (ICD coding E10-E14), with 313 major and 554 minor amputations, as well as 46 inlays, among those insured by the for- mer AOK Brandenburg.

Demographic effects and regional aspects

Reserves of structural effectiveness and efficiency, along with the requirements of demographic change, require healthcare that is more aligned with this generation’s needs and with improved regional coor- dination. In its report 2009, the advisory board for healthcare development calls for an increase in care research, especially when new legal frameworks within the compulsory healthcare insurance open the way for innovative contract and care opportunities, the results of which can not easily be forecast.

Regional deficiency of supply

The responsibility for pediatric care relates to the fields of orthopedics, internal medicine (Diabetology), der- matology, and surgery. Licences are granted to those meeting the criteria listed in § 124 SGB V. Expert skin and orthopedic care can prevent foot complications with patients at risk (Wagner 0). This saves considerable ex- penses for medical care and services. In the past there was no comprehensive coverage of preventive pedi- atric care. The AOK has therefore licensed regional contrac- tual partners to practice medical foot care with a corresponding additional qualification to carry out DFS treatment.

RESULTS OF CARE

DFS-Integrated Care Model

Objective: patient-oriented, optimised care with the lowest possible costs

Integrated Care

Since the introduction of the Statutory Health Insurance Modernisation Act in Germany, healthcare ins- urers are required to initiate effective programs by the means of so-called ‘integrated healthcare’ con- tracts. The introduction of integrated healthcare by the legislator signalled a change in the system. The core of the regulation was the introduction of individual (private law) contracts between health ins- urers and service providers, This is intended to improve the coordination between the individual sec- tors and promote competition between service providers.

Legal framework of the integrated care organisation: § 145 a – 146 SGB V “Integrated Care” is a form of care and compensation, combining at least two sectors or specialist fields in the context of a single contract.

Cooperation with the Foot Clinic associated with Birkenwerder

The AOK Nordost aims at increasing quality reserves and profitability through structured treatment programmes and selective contracting. The AOK also received positive inpatient results from the co- operation begun at the close of 2005 with the experienced foot clinic. The rate of major amputations carried out on DFS inpatients have been reduced from 6.8 % in 2006 to 2.0 % in 2010 (Dr. Jürgen Raabe, unpublished data).

AOK Nordost - Die Gesundheitskasse

250,000 people with diabetes suffer from foot lesions.

One million people with diabetes have an increased risk of injury to their feet. For people older than 50 the rate increases by 5 – 10 %. The rate of newly diagnosed cases is between 2.2 and 2.9 %. The danger of amputation is 50 times higher than people without diabetes. (Lawnall 2009)