

Podiatry role in Epidermolysis Bullosa: The importance of allowing a patient to have a voice

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Introduction

Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB) is a group of rare congenital skin conditions characterised by skin fragility and recurrent blister formation, resulting from minor mechanical friction or trauma (1).

Podiatry plays a vital role in the treatment of EB foot related complications (2). However, there is currently no EB podiatry guidelines and limited literature to assist clinicians.

Aim

To highlight the importance of patient/clinician communication and recognising the role podiatry care has in EB management.

Case Study

Ms X, a 46-year-old with a severe type of EB (recessive dystrophic EB) attends an adult EB multidisciplinary service. This patient received podiatry treatment, including standard sharps debridement of painful callus and corns to help her mobility.

Case Study

After this initial consultation, Ms X reportedly endured extreme pain 5-6 days post treatment, affecting her ability to weight-bear. Following this, Ms X provided written feedback, advising standard podiatry care is not always applicable to this patient group.

Results

The treating podiatrist now works closely with these patients to allow them to guide the treatment appropriate for the individual. The podiatrist is also actively working on raising awareness on the differences required in routine treatment when treating EB patients.



Ms X right lateral foot



Ms X plantar right foot

Discussion

In light of the complexity of this condition, this patient has highlighted the difficulties she has faced over the years with transitioning from different services and clinicians. Indicating the importance of strong communication skills and need for clinicians to allow patients to have a voice. This also emphasises the need for an international EB podiatry guideline to help clinicians alter their treatment accordingly.

References

1. Bruckner-Tuderman, L. (2010). Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa: Pathogenesis and Clinical Features. *Dermatologic Clinics*. **28**; 107-114
2. Khan, M. T. (2010). Podiatric management in epidermolysis bullosa. *Dermatologic Clinics*. **28**; 325-333.

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