

High rate of amputations in diabetics

12:09pm Friday 6th September 2013

DIABETICS living across Hampshire are more at risk of having a limb amputated due to inadequate care, new figures have revealed.

Latest statistics from Diabetes UK show that [Southampton](#) and Hampshire have some of the highest diabetes-related amputation rates in England.

Now health bosses across the county have vowed to take action to slash the “unacceptable” amputation rates, with promises of better foot care to help prevent such devastating consequences of the disease.

Both Southampton and Hampshire soar above the national average for amputations, with Southampton seeing 3.8 amputations per 1,000 people and Hampshire slightly lower at 3.4.

Such high rates have sparked “concern” from Diabetes UK, who are calling on Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) to ensure preventable amputations are avoided through top quality care.

Although the charity accepts there are a number of “complex reasons” for such poor performance, they blame a lack of specialist foot care for diabetic patients when they go into hospital.

Dr Steve Townsend, chairman of NHS Southampton City CCG accepts that a total revamp of diabetic care is vital if amputations are going to be reduced, with prevention much better than a cure.

Diabetic care is now a top priority with a focus on foot care, both through [education](#) for health professionals and for patients to be able to take better care of themselves.

Dr Townsend said: “Plans include better identification of risk through use of a consistent assessment and scoring tool in primary care, better information for patients, a foot protection team for medium and high risk feet, and development of multi-disciplinary clinics for active foot disease such as serious infection or ulceration.”

Dr Sarah Schofield, chairman of West Hampshire CCG, vowed similar steps would be taken in the county, with education sessions for GPs and nurses to be able to recognise foot problems at an earlier stage.

Other innovative solutions will be rolled out to tackle the issue including getting patients to have their say on what services they need.

Dr Schofield said: “We know how important it is that patients have access to acute foot care services quickly. “We feel that the current amputation rates are unacceptable and, as a recently created NHS organisation, we are doing everything we can to understand the complex reasons behind this regional trend to make sure we improve outcomes for patients.

“We are investing significant clinical time in this very important area, and this is ongoing.”

Jill Steaton, spokeswoman from Diabetes UK, added: “It is really good news that the CCG is committed to ensuring people with diabetes in the area get adequate foot care.

“We now need to see this commitment backed up by strong action and we will be monitoring the situation to ensure the CCG delivers this level of healthcare and improvements are seen in next year’s figures.”

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