



## Featured Abstract

## Prevalence, Characteristics and Factors Associated with Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy at the Bamenda Regional Hospital

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction.** Diabetic peripheral neuropathy is a common complication of diabetes and reason for hospital visits among people with diabetes. The prevalence varies widely among countries, in part due to the difference in sampling methods and lack of consensus on diagnostic criteria. The glove-stocking form of polyneuropathy is the most common type of neuropathy seen in people with diabetes. Published studies from Cameroon to estimate the prevalence of diabetic peripheral neuropathy are very few, as such the disease burden in our society is obscured.

**Objectives.** This study had as general objective to evaluate the burden of diabetic peripheral neuropathy in patients of the Bamenda Regional Hospital, with it's specific objectives being to estimate the prevalence of diabetic peripheral neuropathy, to describe the clinical features and lastly to identify factors associated with the condition in our area.

We carried out a descriptive cross-sectional study at the Bamenda Regional Hospital. Consenting persons with diabetes were screened for diabetic peripheral neuropathy with two validated scores: the diabetic neuropathic symptom score which consists of four items, each testing the presence of neuropathic symptoms and the diabetic neuropathic examination score which is a set of clinical examinations performed screening for peripheral neuropathy. Cases of diabetic peripheral neuropathy were gotten following administration of the validated neuropathic exam score, and these cases were either symptomatic or asymptomatic following administration of the neuropathic symptom score. Information about medical and diabetic histories were also obtained. All data collected were recorded into a computer software.

**Results.** A total of 161 persons with diabetes participated in the study. The mean age of the study participants was 55.7 +/- 16.4 years. In total, 1/3 of participants had diabetic peripheral neuropathy out of whom 34% were asymptomatic. Physical exercise was a protective factor associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy.

**Conclusion.** About 1/3 of persons with diabetes at the Bamenda Regional Hospital have peripheral neuropathy, with a third of them being asymptomatic. This implies diabetic peripheral neuropathy is a very common problem among people with diabetes at the Bamenda Regional Hospital and should be handled properly to prevent damage and hence decrease in quality of life.