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The Growing Cost of Surgical Interventions for Diabetes Treatment at Vila Central Hospital

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Abstract

Background Preventing and treating Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes is largely funded by the recurrent budget and donor partners of the Ministry of Health (MoH). There have been an increasing number of admissions for Diabetic Foot Sepsis (DFS) to Vila Central Hospital (VCH) as well as increasing number of diabetic related lower limb amputations. The aim of this study is to measure the baseline treatment cost of managing inpatient diabetic foot sepsis (DFS). We specifically analyse the cost of antibiotic usage and wound dressing during 2017-2021 period and compare with 2016 data.

Methods: This study was conducted in the surgical ward of tertiary care unit of VCH supported by key statistics provided by national government, WHO, MOH annual reports, Vanuatu Ministry of Health - Budget and Expenditure Trend Analysis (2016-2021) and VCH annual reports. A descriptive analysis was performed using health information systems (HIS) databases of MoH (Covid-19 Registry, Routine health Information system, Patient Information System, VCH surgical ward admission registry book and mSupply).

Results: 1. The total number of diabetic related lower limb amputations in 2016 was 22. Our findings show there has been a significant increase with an average of 57 amputations reported annually during 2017-2021 period. 2. Debridement is a common surgical procedure for diabetic foot sepsis (DFS). In 2016, there were 62 admissions for DFS to VCH. This number has doubled in 2021 with 121 admissions.

Conclusion The number of admissions and the cost associated with treating diabetic patients has significantly increased over the last few years. This worrying trend highlights the need for improved early detection and early intervention of diabetes to curb this increasing disease burden.