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AMPUTATIONS OF FEET, TOES AND OTHER BODY PARTS. THE COMBINATION OF DIABETES AND GOUT SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES THE RISK

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Compared to the average population, people suffering from both gout and diabetes have a 25 times higher risk of requiring an amputation of peripheral limbs such as feet, toes or lower legs. This is the result of a study presented by experts from the US at the virtual annual congress of the European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) 2020 (1). For this study, the team led by Brian LaMoreaux, MD, MS from Lake Forest/USA evaluated a US register with anonymised data of around 190 million patients. They discovered that people suffering from gout, but not diabetes, have a three-fold risk of amputation. If both diseases occur in combination, the risk is magnified.

Diabetes mellitus and gout are ranked among the most common metabolic disorders in Western industrialised countries: According to figures published by the World Health Organization (WHO), around 60 million Europeans suffer from diabetes (2) and 18 million Europeans suffer from gout (3). "Gout is increasingly being linked to unfavourable cardiovascular, renal and metabolic complications, and now amputation risks", says EULAR president Professor Iain B. McInnes from Glasgow, Scotland, Great Britain. In a current study, Brian LaMoreaux, MD, MS from Lake Forest/USA showed how high the risk of amputations of outer limbs is by evaluating 190 million data sets from a patient database.

The research team divided the patients into four groups according to their medical records: patients with gout; patients with diabetes; patient with both gout and diabetes; and patients with neither disease. Afterwards, they compared how many patients from each group required an amputation of the outer limbs. The amputation rate of patients suffering from neither of those diseases was 0.03 percent. By contrast, the amputation rate of patients with gout rose to 0.16 percent. For people suffering only from diabetes, the value trebled to 0.46 percent. "Patients suffering from either gout or diabetes have a significantly increased risk of an amputation. In patients with both diseases, this effect is further amplified", says Dr. LaMoreaux. According to the results of his study, the amputation rate among patients with both diabetes and gout is 0.77 percent, compared to 0.03 percent in the control group.

Professor John Isaacs, Chair of the Scientific Programme Committee of EULAR, emphasises that these results are of highest relevance for daily clinical practice: "The more we know about the risks, complications and complications of diabetes and gout, the more specifically we can inform patients and optimize therapeutic strategies to possibly prevent serious surgeries such as amputations". According to the expert, the loss of a part of the body is particularly hard for many people, furthering the urgency to properly manage both conditions.

Reference:

- (1) EULAR Abstract No. 2058: Amputation procedures in patients with gout compared to patients with diabetes, LaMoreaux et al., DOI: 10.1136/annrheumdis-2020-eular.2058
- (2) WHO Europe: Diabetes – Data and Statistics: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/diabetes/data-and-statistics> (03/07/2020).

(3) EULAR: RheumaMap. Research Roadmap to transform the lives of people with Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Diseases, 2019.

Event information:

EULAR 2020. Online access to scientific contributions will be available until 1 September 2020.

German Society for Rheumatology (DGRh) Congress, 9–12 September 2020 in Munich

EULAR 2021, 02 - 05 June 2021, Paris, France

About EULAR, The European League Against Rheumatism

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