



# Access to Affordable Comfortable Footwear for Diabetic Patients in Kumi, Uganda

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## Purpose

To decrease diabetic foot ulcers by education and working with a local craftsman to manufacture affordable footwear for diabetic patients living around Kumi town.

## Background

•Diabetes is increasing exponentially in Uganda. In 1972 there were 254 patients with diabetes, now there are over a million or 4% of the Ugandan population.

•Rural Kumi is the poorest district in eastern Uganda with 82% of the population living in poverty.

•Many people in Kumi district can't afford shoes, including patients with diabetes. As a result, diabetic foot ulcers and foot amputations have become increasingly common in Kumi district.

•Comfortable sandals with inserts are available through Kumi Hospital, but cost between \$6 and \$10 US and are too expensive for most diabetic patients.



A diabetic ulcer and a diabetic patient who had his foot amputated due to walking without proper footwear

## Methods

**Discussions were held with the following people to identify local needs and obtain feedback on the project:**

- Patients and the local community
- Kumi Hospital Orthopedic Surgeon
- Atatur Government Hospital Diabetes Focal Person
- Other Health Workers
- District Health Office

**Education about wearing shoes to prevent diabetic foot ulcers:**

- Developed and printed a poster emphasizing the importance of wearing shoes and controlling blood sugar for individuals living with diabetes.
- The poster was also translated into the local language of Ateso.

**Providing access to affordable shoes:**

- Partnered with local tire shoe craftsman to develop more comfortable tire shoes with leather straps.
- Negotiated the price of tire shoe with rubber straps from \$2 to \$1 a pair.
- Negotiated the price of tire shoes with leather straps from \$3 to \$2 a pair.
- Worked with the Diabetes Focal Person to arrange for tire shoe craftsman to come to the government hospital diabetes clinic and make shoes for patients.



\$1 Shoes



\$2 Shoes



Tire shoe craftsman making shoes for a diabetic patients

## Results

- A total of 48 pairs of shoes were made over a 2 week period: 45 pairs with leather straps, 3 pairs with rubber straps.
- Overall patients were pleased with the shoes and expressed that \$2 was an affordable price for a pair of comfortable durable shoes.
- New patients and those who did not get shoes made may go to Kumi town and the tire shoe craftsman will make them shoes.
- The 10 posters were printed (5 in English and 5 in Ateso) and put up in: Kumi Hospital, Atatur Hospital, Kumi District Health Office, Kumi Town Health enter and Mulago Hospital.



Educational posters printed in both English and Ateso

## Discussion

- Shoes are just one facet of an approach of foot ulcer prevention that would ideally include better treatment as well as diabetes prevention.
- Ideally, the project should be evaluated to determine if it is sustainable and to see if those provided with shoes have fewer foot problems.

## References

Uganda Bureau of Statistics. (2005). *Where are the Poor? Mapping Patterns of Well-Being in Uganda*. Wasswa, H. (2006). Uganda struggles to cope with rise in diabetes incidence. *British Medical Journal*, 333, 672.

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