

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer wound in diabetic subjects: A meta-analysis

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Funding information

Shaoyang Federation of Social Science, Grant/Award Number: 21YBB39; Hunan Education Department, Grant/Award Number: 20C1673

Abstract

A meta-analysis was performed to evaluate the association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer wounds in diabetic subjects. A systematic literature search up to March 2022 incorporated 7586 subjects with diabetes mellitus at the beginning of the study; 1565 were using diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds, and 6021 were non-ulcerated diabetic subjects. Statistical tools like the dichotomous and contentious method were used within a random or fixed-influence model to establish the odds ratio (OR) and mean difference (MD) with 95% confidence intervals (CIs) to evaluate the influence of vitamin D deficiency in managing diabetic foot ulcer wound. Diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds had significantly lower vitamin D levels (MD, -6.48 ; 95% CI, -10.84 to -2.11 , $P < .004$), higher prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (<50 nmol/L) (OR, 1.82; 95% CI, 1.32-2.52, $P < .001$), and higher prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency (OR, 2.53; 95% CI, 1.65-3.89, $P < .001$) compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects. Diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds had significantly lower vitamin D levels, higher prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, and higher prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects. Further studies are required to validate these findings.

KEYWORDS

diabetic foot ulcer wound, severe, the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, vitamin D deficiency, vitamin D levels

Key Messages

- a meta-analysis was performed to evaluate the association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer wounds in diabetic subjects
- diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds had significantly lower vitamin D levels, higher prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, and higher prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects. Further studies are required to validate these findings

1 | BACKGROUND

The diabetic foot ulcer wound is a severe problem in subjects with diabetes mellitus.¹ Subjects with diabetic foot ulcer wounds have a higher death rate compared with diabetic subjects with no foot ulcer wound. Daousi et al showed that the death rate of diabetic foot ulcer wounds is around twice that of non-ulcerated diabetic subjects.² Though, there is a lack of evidence about the probable contributing influences on diabetic foot ulcer wounds. There is increasing attention to the advantageous role of vitamin D in diabetes mellitus. Several researchers have shown vitamin D influences T-cell-mediated immunity, pancreatic insulin secretion and action, cell growth, and healing.³ Yakob et al reported that the low levels of vitamin D might be associated with the increase in diabetic foot infections.⁴ Results from in-vitro studies showed that vitamin D can restore the manufacture of antimicrobial peptides in the primary cell from diabetic foot ulcer wounds and progress the in-vitro wound-healing assays.⁵ In rats, the topical application of vitamin D enhanced wound healing in a dose-dependent way.⁶ An additional study showed that calcitriol can endorse endothelial and keratinocyte cell migration in a diabetic foot ulcer wound

model.⁷ Therefore, results from earlier studies revealed the probable advantageous influences of vitamin D on wound healing in diabetic foot ulcer wounds. Though, there were no conclusive obtainable outcomes. Hence, in this study, we conducted a meta-analysis evaluating the association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer wounds in diabetic subjects.

2 | METHODS

A methodology was established according to the epidemiology statement⁸ which is further organised into a meta-analysis.

2.1 | Study selection

The main indications of the meta-analysis were to assess the association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer wounds in diabetic subjects using statistical tools like mean difference (MD), odds ratio (OR), frequency rate, or relative risk at a 95% confidence interval (CI).

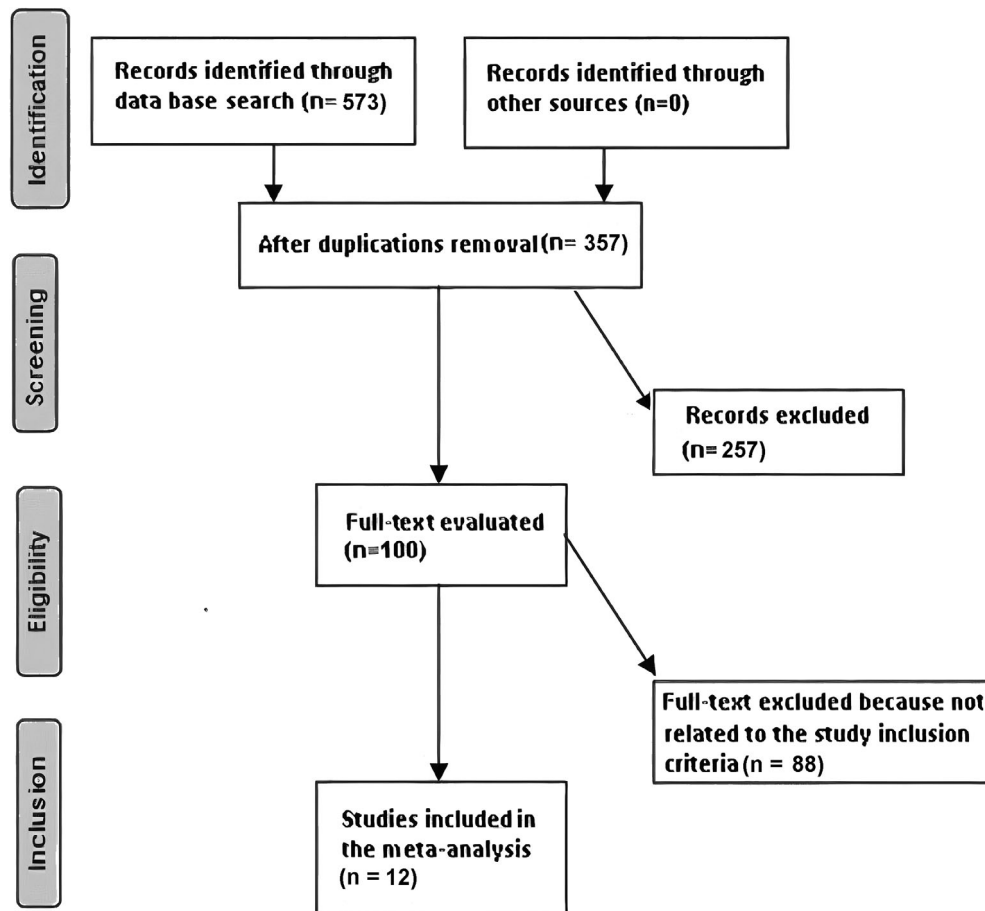


FIGURE 1 Diagram illustrating the mode of meta-analysis

The literature review was limited to the English language. However, inclusion criteria were not restricted by study type or size, and studies with no relationships were excluded from the study, for example, letters, editorials, commentary, and review articles. Figure 1 represents the model of meta-analysis.

Inclusion criteria of the analysis incorporated into the meta-analysis are given below.

1. The studies were prospective studies, randomised controlled trials, or retrospective studies.
2. Subjects selected for the study were subjects with diabetes mellitus
3. Vitamin D deficiency was considered intervention programs
4. The study comprised diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds, compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects.

The exclusion criteria adopted for the analysis were

1. Studies that do not assess the association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer wounds in diabetic subjects
2. Studies with management other than vitamin D deficiency.
3. Studies that do not influence comparative outcomes.

2.2 | Identification

Search strategy adopted the protocol as the PICOS principle the critical elements of PICOS were P (population): subjects with diabetes mellitus; I (intervention/exposure): vitamin D deficiency; C (comparison): diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wound compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects; O (outcome): vitamin D levels, prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (<50 nmol/L), and severe vitamin D deficiency; S (study design): without any limitation.⁹ A systematic and brief literature survey was done on MEDLINE/PubMed, Google Scholar, Embase, OVID, Cochrane Library, and until March 2022, using search keywords like vitamin D deficiency, severe vitamin D deficiency, vitamin D levels, the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, and diabetic foot ulcer wound as depicted in Table 1. The research papers were arranged using End-Note software to exclude the duplicates. Moreover, a rigorous analysis of all title and abstracts were done to delete any data that did not indicate any risk factors or impact of vitamin D deficiency on the outcomes studied. Related Information on this topic was collected from the remaining topics.

TABLE 1 Search strategy for each database

Database	Search strategy
Pubmed	#1 'vitamin D deficiency' [MeSH Terms] OR 'diabetic foot ulcer wound' [MeSH Terms] OR 'prevalence of vitamin D deficiency' [All Fields] #2 'severe vitamin D deficiency' [MeSH Terms] OR 'vitamin D levels' [All Fields] #3 #1 AND #2
Embase	'vitamin D deficiency'/exp OR 'diabetic foot ulcer wound'/exp OR 'prevalence of vitamin D deficiency'/exp #2 'severe vitamin D deficiency'/exp OR 'vitamin D levels'/exp #3 #1 AND #2
Cochrane library	#1 (vitamin D deficiency):ti,ab,kw OR (diabetic foot ulcer wound):ti,ab,kw OR (prevalence of vitamin D deficiency):ti,ab,kw (Word variations have been searched) #2 (severe vitamin D deficiency):ti,ab,kw OR (vitamin D levels):ti,ab,kw (Word variations have been searched) #3 #1 AND #2

2.2.1 | Screening

A standard format was established, including the study and subject-related data. In addition, a traditional form was categorised to include the first author's surname, place of practice, duration of the study, design of the study, sample size, subject type, demography, categories, treatment mode, qualitative and quantitative evaluation, information source, primary outcome evaluation, and statistical analysis.⁹

"Risk of bias tool" was adopted to assess the methodological quality using Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions Version 5.1. To ensure the quality of the methodology, the corresponding author resolved any conflicts through a discussion that arose during the collection of literature by two reviewers.¹⁰

2.3 | The different levels of risk of bias encountered in assessment criteria

In the assessment of criteria, there are three different levels of risk of bias. The bias is considered low risk when all quality parameters were met; moderate risk when parameters were only partially completed or not met; It is regarded as a high-risk bias when all quality parameters were not met/or not included. Inconsistencies are checked by examining the paper.

2.4 | Eligibility criteria

The effect of vitamin D deficiency on vitamin D levels, prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, and severe vitamin D deficiency was considered the study's eligibility criteria. Therefore, an evaluation of vitamin D deficiency in managing diabetic foot ulcer wounds compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects was extracted to form a summary.

2.5 | Inclusion criteria

This sensitivity analysis included only the association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer

TABLE 2 Characteristics of the selected studies for the meta-analysis

Study	Country	Total	Diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wound	Non-ulcerated diabetic subjects
Kota ¹²	India	200	100	100
Tiwari ¹³	India	289	125	164
Zubair ¹⁴	India	280	134	146
Tiwari ¹⁵	India	219	112	107
Afarideh ¹⁶	Iran	60	30	30
Feldkamp ¹⁷	Germany	207	104	103
Çağlar ¹⁸	Turkey	107	60	47
Greenhagen ¹⁹	USA	100	54	46
Dai ²⁰	China	51	21	30
Xiao ²¹	China	4284	245	4039
Tsitsou ²²	Greece	68	33	35
Tang ²³	China	1721	547	1174
Total		7586	1565	6021

wounds in diabetic subjects compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects. In comparison, the sensitivity analysis subcategory had the diabetic foot ulcer wound in diabetic subjects compared with the non-ulcerated diabetic subjects.

2.6 | Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis adopted a dichotomous and contentious method to calculate the OR and MD at a CI of 95% on the random influence or fixed influence model. Initially, the I^2 index scale was assessed between 0% and 100%, and the scale for heterogeneity was set between 0%, 25%, 50%, and 75%, which indicated scales as no, low, moderate, and high, respectively.¹¹ If I^2 was 50%, the random influence was considered, and if $I^2 < 50%$, it was regarded as fixed-influence. Initial results are pooled, and subgroup analysis was done to get a P -value that is statistically significant $< .05$. The Egger regression test assesses publication bias (if $P \geq .05$) by calculating funnel plots of the logarithm of odds ratios compared to standard errors.⁹ The statistical analysis was done by “Reviewer manager version 5.3” (The Nordic Cochrane Centre, The Cochrane Collaboration, Copenhagen, Denmark) with two-tailed p values.

3 | RESULTS

A total of 12 studies reported between 2013 and 2022 satisfied the inclusion criteria for the meta-analysis among the 573 distinctive reports.¹²⁻²³ This meta-analysis study included 7586 subjects with diabetes mellitus at the beginning of the study; 1565 were using diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds, and 6021 were non-ulcerated diabetic subjects. All studies evaluated the association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer

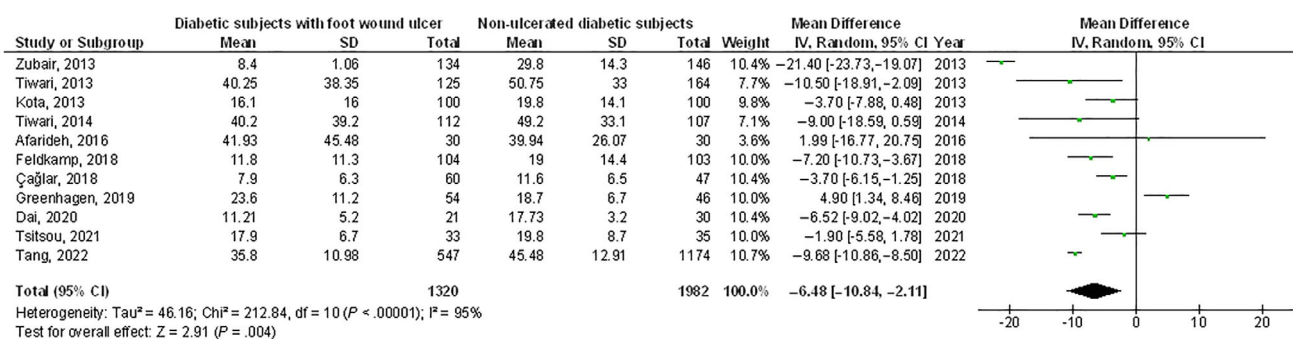


FIGURE 2 A forest plot illustrating the vitamin D levels in diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects

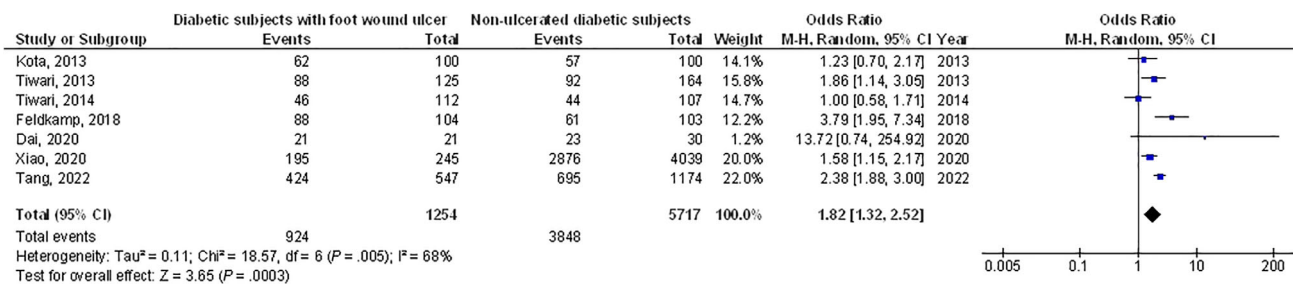


FIGURE 3 A forest plot illustrating the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (<50 nmol/L) when in diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects

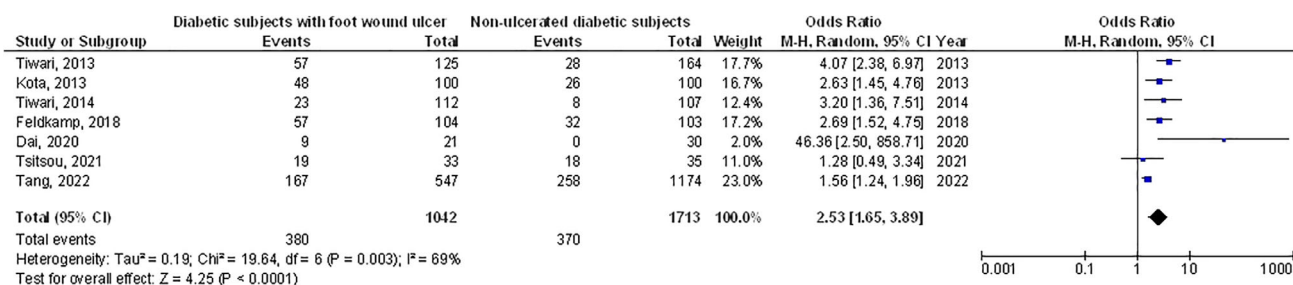


FIGURE 4 A forest plot illustrating the severe vitamin D deficiency in diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects

wounds in diabetic subjects. Eleven studies reported data stratified to the vitamin D levels, seven studies reported data stratified to the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (<50 nmol/L), and seven studies reported data stratified to the severe vitamin D deficiency (<20 nmol/L). 51 to 4284 subjects were involved as a study sample size in the selected studies. All information about these 12 studies is given in Table 2.

Diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds had significantly lower vitamin D levels (MD, -6.48; 95% CI, -10.84 to -2.11, $P < .004$) with high heterogeneity as $I^2 = 95%$, higher prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (<50 nmol/L) (OR, 1.82; 95% CI, 1.32-2.52, $P < .001$) with heterogeneity denoted as moderate ($I^2 = 68%$), and higher prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency (OR, 2.53; 95% CI, 1.65-3.89, $P < .001$) with moderate heterogeneity as $I^2 = 69%$ compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects as shown in Figures 2 to 4.

The pooled data has not considered the elements like group age, ethnicity, and gender because of the lack of reports on these elements. The results of Egger regression analysis funnel plots during the quantitative measurement have not proved any publication bias ($P = .88$). However, problems like poor methodological tools were identified in the selected randomised dressings-led trial. Selective reporting bias was not detected during this meta-analysis.

4 | DISCUSSION

This meta-analysis comprised 7586 subjects with diabetes mellitus at the beginning of the study; 1565 were using diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds, and 6021 were non-ulcerated diabetic subjects.¹²⁻²³ Diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds had significantly lower vitamin D levels, higher prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, and higher severe vitamin D deficiency compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects. Yet, the analysis of results must be done with attention due to the low number of selected studies for the meta-analysis and the low sample size of 4 out of 12 selected studies found for the meta-analysis with ≤ 100 subjects as sample size; recommending the necessity for additional studies with a larger sample size to confirm these findings or perhaps to significantly impact confidence in the effect assessment.

The main aim of this meta-analysis was to show and assess all current indications about the association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer wounds in diabetic subjects. Vitamin D was recommended to be vital in numerous chronic diseases, for example, diabetes.²⁴ Low serum vitamin D levels are related to insulin resistance, impaired β -cell function, and the progress of diabetes mellitus.²⁵ There is also continuing attention to the relationship between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic problems. Zubair et al showed

that lower vitamin D had a significant role in the pathogenesis of foot ulcer wounds.¹⁴ Multiple mechanisms were in this procedure. Hyperglycemia in diabetic subjects disturbed the normal procedure of cytokine manufacture, which results in decreased wound healing.²⁶ Vitamin D supplements were shown to recover glycemic control. Sugden et al showed the influence of vitamin D in the enhancement of endothelial function.²⁶ A single high dose of oral vitamin D can significantly recover the brachial artery flow-mediated vasodilatation by 2.3%. Furthermore, vitamin D was recommended as an immune stimulant.¹⁹ Urashima et al recommended that vitamin D supplements could decrease the risk of influenza A in schoolchildren.²⁷ Van et al reported that vitamin D stimulated phagocytosis and killed the intestine bacteria by macrophages.²⁸ Vitamin D also stopped the secretion of the T helper type 1 cytokines interferon-gamma and interleukin-2 while stimulating the manufacture of Th2 cytokines, which might endorse wound healing.²⁹ Though, the mechanism of the relationship between serum vitamin D levels and diabetic foot ulcer wounds is still unclear. So, the identification of the relationship between diabetic foot ulcer wounds with vitamin D could give us some inferences to suggest new treatments for diabetic wound foot ulcers. Vitamin D supplements might be a valid healing choice for diabetes with foot ulcer wounds and vitamin D deficiency. More future studies are essential to confirm the influence of vitamin D supplements in the inhibition or management of diabetic foot ulcer wounds. This meta-analysis exhibited a correlation between the association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer wounds in diabetic subjects. However, more trials are still required to explain the exact clinical difference in the results and closeness. Moreover, to study the elements with the groupage and gender; our meta-analysis studies could not prove these factors are related to the outcomes.³⁰⁻³⁷ This was suggested in other meta-analyses, which showed similar effects.³⁸⁻⁴⁰ In summary, diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds had significantly lower vitamin D levels, higher prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, and higher prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects.

4.1 | Limitations

One of the study's limitations was various biases existed as many studies were exempted from this meta-analysis as these studies were not meeting the inclusion criteria. Furthermore, there was an uncertainty in linking the factors like gender, ethnicity, and age to this analysis. The study compared the correlation of the influences of

vitamin D deficiency in managing diabetic foot ulcer wounds. The analysis depends on data from existing studies which can result in bias as it contains incomplete details. The meta-analysis consisted of 12 studies; 4 of them were small, ≤ 100 . Several lost data and unpublished studies may aggregate into an influence bias. Subjects used various medications, healthcare schemes, treatments, and doses. And also, the type of stem cells in the included studies varied.

5 | CONCLUSIONS

Diabetic subjects with foot ulcer wounds had significantly lower vitamin D levels, higher prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, and higher prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency compared with non-ulcerated diabetic subjects. Yet, the analysis of results must be done with attention due to the low number of selected studies for the meta-analysis and the low sample size of some selected studies; recommending the necessity for additional studies with a larger sample size to confirm these findings or perhaps to significantly impact confidence in the effect assessment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scientific research project of Hunan Education Department [20C1673]. Scientific research project of Shaoyang Federation of Social Science [21YBB39].

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The corresponding author is bound to give the database of meta-analysis on request.

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How to cite this article: Lin J, Mo X, Yang Y, Tang C, Chen J. Association between vitamin D deficiency and diabetic foot ulcer wound in diabetic subjects: A meta-analysis. *Int Wound J.* 2022;1-8. doi:[10.1111/iwj.13836](https://doi.org/10.1111/iwj.13836)