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Lymphoedema self-care in resource poor settings - challenges for people affected by filariasis- and podoconiosis-related lymphoedema in rural Bangladesh and Ethiopia.

Abstract

Lymphoedema from lymphatic filariasis (LF) and podoconiosis causes disfigurement, disability, stigma, and social exclusion for over 20 million people globally. The WHO recommends a community-based home-care model of service delivery where the focus is on hygiene aspects of lymphoedema management to reduce the frequency and severity of acute secondary infections. We conducted randomised controlled trials among people affected by moderate and severe lymphoedema in Bangladesh and Ethiopia and showed the benefits of adding deep breathing and lymphatic massage to the daily self-care regime. This presentation will describe how the lymphoedema self-care training was delivered and discuss the challenges inherent in the geographical and political setting in each country. Lifelong daily self-care must be at the heart of sustainable and person-focused service delivery for people living with lymphoedema, and lessons from low- and middle-income countries have the potential to cross disease and geographic boundaries to inform us in self-care for everyone.