Foot disorders affect approximately 20-60% of Americans and are increasingly linked to chronic mobility limitations and disability. The Framingham Foot Study, an ancillary study of the FHS, is an observational cohort study of adults to examine the role of foot disorders upon functional limitations and disability. This cohort was comprised of members from the Framingham Study Original Cohort and the Framingham Offspring Cohort. The Framingham Study Original Cohort was formed in 1948 from a two-thirds sample of the town of Framingham, MA in order to study risk factors for heart disease. This cohort has been followed biennially since that time. The Framingham Offspring cohort, formed in 1972, consists of adult offspring who had a parent in the Original Cohort, and the spouses of the offspring. This group has been followed every 4 years since cohort inception to study familial risk factors for heart disease. Members of the Framingham cohorts were examined for the Framingham Foot Study (n=2179) either at their scheduled Framingham clinic examination or at a call-back examination.

Foot disorders were assessed using a validated Foot Assessment Clinical Tool that captures the main features of common foot disorders. Reliability of this instrument has been shown to be excellent [Hannan et al., 2001; Hannan et al., 2003]. Briefly, trained clinical examiners conducted a physical examination of a participant’s feet, collected data on medical history, plantar pressures using a computerized mat, and administered risk assessment questionnaires. Specific disorders of interest included hallux valgus, toe deformities other than hallux (lesser toe deformities of hammer toes, claw toes and overlapping toes), pes cavus, and pes planus. The structural foot disorders were indicated as present or absent based on an atlas of pictorial depictions of each foot disorder. For example, hallux valgus was defined as the angular deviation of the hallux with respect to the first metatarsal bone toward the lesser toes at 15° or more, and appears as a medial bony enlargement of the first metatarsal head.

References:

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