

Authors summary

People affected by leprosy with nerve damage remain at risk of developing ulcers, which can lead to disability and limitations in daily activities and work. Self-care for affected limbs is simple but adherence to it is a challenge. We evaluated an enhanced self-care program integrated into the public health system in Janjgir-Champa district, Chhattisgarh, India. The program was implemented through community-based health workers and self-care was provided at the home of the individuals affected. The program aimed to strengthen self-care practice to improve ulcer healing and prevention and reduce overall disability. We enrolled 261 patients and 255 completed at least one or more follow-up over the 12-month period. After intervention, the prevalence of ulcers declined at later follow-up assessments, and participants reported improvements in quality of life and reduced social participation restrictions. However, there was no clear evidence of reduction in the number of ulcers per person or ulcer size over time. Findings from qualitative assessments showed that implementation within the national program was feasible, and acceptable although adherence to self-care practices remained challenging for some participants. Findings suggest that self-care interventions can be delivered effectively through public health services supported by community-health workers and family members. These approaches may contribute to ulcer reduction and disability prevention among people affected by leprosy.