Diabetes: How Much Do I Know?

MD Sinczak¹, MA Saeed¹,²

¹Department of Diabetes, Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals, Oxford, UK
²Department of Diabetes, University Hospitals Birmingham, Birmingham, UK

Introduction and Aim

• Diabetes is a common, chronic and costly condition that incurs a significant personal and public health burden³
• The diagnosed population of people living with diabetes is 2.8 million⁴, with the incidence increasing in all age groups
• Good education, e.g., modification of lifestyle³, plays an important role in reducing the incidence and delaying diabetes in high risk groups
• The aim of our study was to assess knowledge of diabetes in patients without this condition

Methods

• 100 patients on medical and surgical wards in a small district general hospital were asked fifteen true or false questions about diabetes
• Inclusion criteria for the study were no past medical history of diabetes and normal mental status
• Questionnaires were anonymous and no demographic data was collected in order to gain confidence of the respondents

Results

• 69% of patients answered ‘don’t know’ to at least one question; 7% selected ‘don’t know’ for all fifteen questions
• While the majority (80%) of patients could correctly identify symptoms of diabetes, only 62% knew that diabetes could result from a deficiency of insulin
• 3% did not perceive obesity, lack of exercise and poor diet as risk factors towards diabetes
• 49% were unsure about available treatment
• 79% understood that diabetes increases risk of cardiac and renal complications, but 57% were unsure whether it causes any ocular complications.

Conclusions

• This study highlights lack of public awareness about diabetes
• With increasing incidence of diabetes in the general population, education is essential for development of public health
• More Government initiatives should be undertaken to increase public awareness of diabetes

References

1. Diabetes in the UK 2010: Key statistics on diabetes
2. Diabetes UK. Reports and statistics (Diabetes prevalence 2010)

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