

Diabetes: How Much Do I Know?

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Introduction and Aim

- Diabetes is a common, chronic and costly condition that incurs a significant personal and public health burden¹
- The diagnosed population of people living with diabetes is 2.8 million², 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

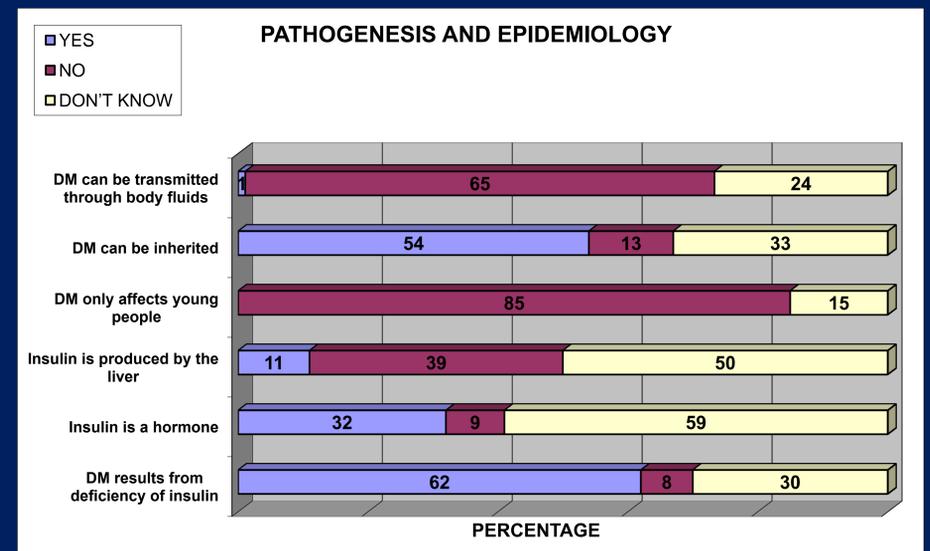


TABLE 1: Pathogenesis and Epidemiology

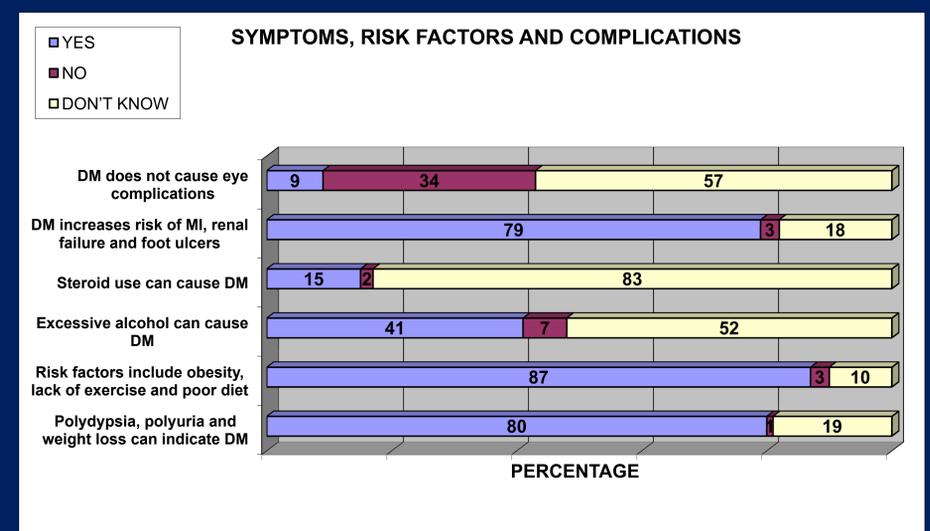


TABLE 2: Symptoms, Risk factors and Complications

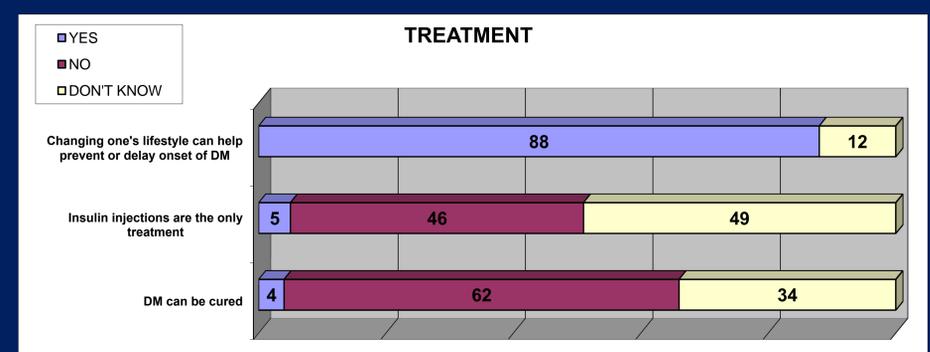


TABLE 3: Treatment

References

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2. Diabetes UK: Reports and statistics (Diabetes prevalence 2010)
<http://www.diabetes.org.uk/Professionals/Publications-reports-and-resources/Reports-statistics-and-case-studies/Reports/Diabetes-prevalence-2010/>
3. Prevention of type 2 diabetes mellitus by changes in lifestyle among subjects with impaired glucose tolerance. Tuomilehto J, et al. N Engl J Med 2001; 344: 1343–1350