



OBSTACLES FACED DURING MANAGEMENT OF DIABETES: A REPORT FROM A TERTIARY CARE CENTRE IN WESTERN UTTAR PRADESH (INDIA)

Alankar Tiwari^{★1}, Manish Srivastav¹, Nihit Kharkwal¹, Keshav Kumar Gupta²

¹ Senior Resident (academic), Department of Human Metabolism and Endocrinology, Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Medical College, Meerut, India

² Professor and Head, Department of Human Metabolism and Endocrinology, Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Medical College, Meerut, India

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*Corresponding Author:

Alankar Tiwari

Email: tiwarialankar@gmail.com

Abstract

This is a short report based on personal experience of clinicians and senior residents working in a superspeciality department at a tertiary care center in Western Uttar Pradesh. It highlights the issues and hindrances faced by them during managing the patients of diabetes attending the superspecialty OPD.

Main text: Diabetes mellitus is one of the most prevalent non communicable disease all over the world and has taken a status of pandemic during recent years. Current global prevalence of 425 million is expected to rise upto 629 million by 2045¹. Around more than 60% of world's diabetic population belongs to Asia to which India and China contribute the maximum². Though diabetes is prevalent pan-India homogenously but here I am writing to you about the problems being faced by the physicians and endocrinologists of Western UP during the management of diabetes, which are specific to this particular region. The biggest challenge faced by us during treatment is the illiteracy of patients. Illiteracy makes them ignorant towards the gravity of the disease status and its further consequences. They are hard nuts to crack when it comes to make them understand how poor is their glycemic control and what bad effects it will put on their body. Secondly, people here are quite rigid and a bit aggressive, be it men or women; so we have to handle them with utmost care and fragility. The third

common obstacle is the repulsion from insulin therapy. It is a very common myth here that if a patient starts taking insulin for glycemic control, he/she will remain on insulin therapy for life. Ridiculously, patients say that they will get addicted to insulin once it has been started. One such patient told to me that he heard somewhere that even if you drink water you have to inject insulin immediately. And it becomes very tough for us to bust off these kinds of myths and persuade the patients to take insulin. Also, people get panicked just on hearing the name of injections and say I will take any medication but insulin. Another very troublesome issue with management of diabetes which we face every other day is non-compliance. This particular problem is seen with literate and illiterate patients equally. In follow up visits, many of them do not bring their previous prescriptions. Furthermore, almost two-thirds of the patients on insulin therapy are not taking the prescribed doses. When asked about this, they simply say they are illiterate and cannot read the units in prescription and somebody else at home is giving them injections. That somebody never accompanies the patient. We really feel helpless in front of these kinds of defaulters. Another issue is total dependence over medicines given in hospital supply. Most of the patients, whether affording or non-affording will take only those anti-diabetic medications which are available free of cost in hospital pharmacy, and are quite reluctant to buy the ones not available, irrespective of the importance of those medicines in management of the disease. And last but the biggest problem is with diet modification. Most of the patients here take jaggery in tea if asked to restrict sugar intake. Taking toned milk is considered as a sign against the prosperity. For all these issues, one and only solution what we think is patient education. So, we have started educating our patients and making them aware regarding the diabetes and its management for half an hour every week. Let us see what amount of change this little effort from our side brings.

References:

[1.]IDF Diabetes Atlas. Eighth ed.2017.

[2.]JCN Chan, V Malik, W Jia, T Kadowaki, CS Yagnik, K Yoon et al. Diabetes in asia: epidemiology, risk factors and pathophysiology. JAMA.2009;301:2129-2140