

PROFILE OF DIABETIC PATIENTS ATTENDING A DIABETIC CLINIC IN A TEACHING HOSPITAL

S.M.J.P. SURAWEEERA¹, U. ILLANGASEKERA² AND P.A.J. PERERA³

¹Department of Community Medicine, ²Department of Medicine and ³ Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, Peradeniya

Diabetes has recently become an important public health problem in developing countries including Sri Lanka. If present trends persist, by 2025, most people of the expected 228 million diabetics in developing countries will be in the 45-64 years age group.

The objective of this study was to determine the profile of newly diagnosed patients with diabetes mellitus attending the diabetic clinic at Teaching Hospital Peradeniya. 366 newly diagnosed diabetic patients presenting at this clinic were administered a standard questionnaire. Questions included age, gender, and ethnicity, family history of diabetes mellitus, alcohol intake, smoking and frequency of meals. Height and weight were measured and Body Mass Index (BMI) calculated. Waist circumference and hip circumference were measured and waist to hip ratio calculated. Almost 20% of patients in this sample were below the age of 40 years. Peak presentation of diabetes was in the 51-60 year age group. Mean age at diagnosis was 51 years. Of the patients, 61.2% were women and 38.8% were men; 85.5% were Sinhalese, 11.7% were Moor and 2.7% were Tamil. Only 45.4% were obese while 12.2% had a BMI below 20 kg/m². Mean BMI of diabetic patients was 24.6 kg/m² the mean BMI of Moor patients (25.3 kg/m²) were higher than that of Sinhalese patients (24.6 kg/m²). The mean BMI of Sinhalese patients was higher than that of Tamil patients (22.0 kg/m²). Differences between BMI values of Sinhalese and Moors and Sinhalese and Tamil were significant (P < 0.05).

Of the diabetic men, only 2.1% had waist to hip ratio more than 1.0 whereas of the diabetic women 29% had waist to hip ratio more than 0.85. Positive family history of diabetes among patients was obtained in 51.9% of the patients. Difference between family history of diabetes among Sinhalese (50.0%) (159/313) and Tamil (20.0%) (2/10) was significant (P < 0.05) whereas difference between Sinhalese (50.0%) (159/313) and Moor (67.4%) (29/43) was not significant. Only 12.8% of patients had a history of taking drugs contributing to or aggravating diabetes mellitus. Of the male patients, 15% had a history of consuming alcohol while 11.2% were smokers. Higher frequency of meals (more than 3 meals) was seen in 48.6% of the patients. Almost all of the findings in this study except sex ratio are in agreement with the previous studies done in Sri Lanka.

This indicates that profile of patients with diabetes mellitus attending diabetic clinic of this Teaching Hospital is similar to what had been noticed in studies done during the last 5 decades in Sri Lanka. The rise in the prevalence of diabetes mellitus seem not have had much effect on the patient profile of this clinic.

Financial Assistance by the University Research Grant is acknowledged.