

FOOD PATTERNS AND COMPLIANCE WITH DIETARY REGIMENS IN NON-INSULIN DEPENDENT DIABETIC PATIENTS IN PAKISTAN

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Diabetes Mellitus is one of the most common metabolic disorders in the world. The majority of diabetic cases are of type 2, or non-insulin-dependent-diabetic-mellitus (NIDDM). Dietary modification is the cornerstone of NIDDM treatment but is often rendered ineffective due to patient non-compliance. Research is needed to study factors affecting patient compliance in order that effective strategies can be designed towards its improvement. Most of the compliance based studies have been conducted in developed countries and it is difficult to generalize their results to diabetic patients in a developing country such as Pakistan.

This study was undertaken to determine the type of dietary advice given to NIDDM patients, their actual dietary intake, the level of compliance and some of the factors affecting compliance. This research would lead to determination of diabetes education needs and thus to the design of relevant and effective patient education programs. Such programs are virtually non-existent at present in developing countries.

Two hundred NIDDM patients were interviewed in the city of Lahore, Pakistan, using a questionnaire covering demographic data, anthropometry, basic diabetes knowledge, regimen definition, environmental factors and dietary intake data. Glycosylated hemoglobin levels (HbA1c%) were determined on 92 subjects as indication of dietary compliance. Twenty-one had HbA1c% values in excess of 10.0 with a total of 68% of the subjects having HbA1c% in excess of 8.0. The onset of diabetic complications was apparent in more than half of the total subjects.

Clearly, the majority of these NIDDM patients are not in dietary compliance, although a majority of them (71%) considered themselves compliant. It is anticipated that analysis of the questionnaires will reveal specific and general needs in this population in order to facilitate compliance.

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