

EPIDEMIOLOGY—DIABETES COMPLICATIONS

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Diabetes Emotional-Related Distress among Arabs

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Diabetes is a complex disease with many factors affecting the day-to-day dynamics of self-management. Studies have shown that diabetes-related emotional distress is common among individuals with diabetes, and it is a predictor of self-management and medication adherence. This study investigated the level of diabetes-related emotional distress among Arabs, and examined the associated socio-demographic and clinical factors. A total of 150 adults with diabetes completed the Problem Areas In Diabetes (PAID) scale at the time of their medical visit. Socio-demographic and clinical data were collected. Height, weight, blood pressure (BP) was recorded. Most recent HbA1c and lipid levels were extracted from the medical records. Out of the 150 individuals, 58% were female, 70% were Kuwaiti nationals, 65% had type 2 diabetes, 61% were married, 75% were non-smoker, 93% completed their secondary education, 53% were obese, 77% were on insulin, and 19.3% had at least two complications. The mean age and diabetes duration were 42.0 ± 17.0 years, and 12.0 ± 7.2 years respectively. The mean systolic and diastolic BP was 122.1 ± 12.4 , and 76.5 ± 6.2 mmHg respectively. The mean HbA1c was $8.6 \pm 1.9\%$. The mean PAID score was 34.3 ± 21.3 . About 39% of the patients had a PAID score of 40 or higher. Higher scores of PAID were reported by women, being single, with education lower than university, and being treated with multiple insulin therapy. There was significant positive correlation between PAID score and LDL-C level ($r=0.17$, $p<0.05$). Age, BP level, and BMI were not significantly related to the PAID score. There was no significant association between PAID score and the type of diabetes, smoking, or presence of complications. These findings indicate that diabetes emotional-related distress is common among Arabs with diabetes. Socio-demographic factors and treatment regimen should be considered as important elements in the strategies to help individuals with diabetes to cope with diabetes-related emotional distress, and ultimately to improve clinical outcomes.