



Medicine

Category: Clinical

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Why patients do not attend their scheduled appointments in the diabetes clinic?

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Introduction:

Diabetes is a chronic complex disease with acute and chronic complications. Effective diabetes care management requires life-long structured approach, including medication management and screening for complications. Non-attendance to the clinic found to be associated with worse glycemic and lipid control, and higher prevalence of diabetes complications. Studies suggest that patients' behavior plays a role in non-attendance, and found that telephone reminders may be helpful in promoting attendance. The aim of this study is to identify the main reasons for non-attendance.

Methods:

The setting was the diabetes outpatient clinic in one of the general hospitals in Kuwait. The register of the clinic attendance was traced from February to December 2015. Patients who missed their appointments and attended the clinic without an appointment were asked about their reasons for missing their scheduled appointment.

Results:

From the 2514 appointments that were scheduled, 1608 (64%) patients attended the clinic according to their schedule, whereas 700 (28%) patients attended the clinic without a scheduled appointment. The main reasons given for missing the scheduled appointment were travel (27.0%), short of medication (12.7%), school schedule (10.8%), work commitment (6.6%), refusing to come for follow up (6.4%), forgetting (6.0%), attending another diabetes clinic (5.7%), add or change medication (4.1%), and patients' sickness (3.9%).

Conclusions:

The findings of this study indicate that there are many factors contributing to the high prevalence of non-attendance in diabetes clinics. Intervention strategies to improve adherence to diabetes clinic appointments should target the main reasons for non-attendance, particularly to the factors that are related to patients' behavior and to those related to organizations' logistic factors in order to facilitate patients' attendance, and ultimately improving diabetes outcomes.

Key Words: Diabetes; Attendance; Appointment

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