

Characteristics of patients with diabetes mellitus on first presentation to the Diabetic Center in Teaching Hospital Jaffna

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Background and Objective: Diabetes mellitus is a multifactorial disease. Its risk factors include age, family history, history of gestational diabetes, high body mass index (BMI), unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, smoking, alcohol, and stress. Much of the burden of diabetes is caused by its complications, namely retinopathy, nephropathy, neuropathy, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, and cerebral vascular accidents. Hypertension and dyslipidemia are comorbid conditions related to diabetes mellitus. This study describes the prevalence of risk factors, complications, and glycemic control (HbA1c) among patients with diabetes mellitus who present for the first time to the Diabetic Center, Teaching Hospital Jaffna, during a six-month period in 2020.

Methods: This is a hospital-based descriptive cross-sectional study. Data were extracted from the computerized database available at the Diabetic Center, Teaching Hospital Jaffna. Data were analyzed using SPSS software. Numerical variables were summarized into mean or median. The prevalence of risk factors and complications were summarized as frequencies and percentages.

Results: Out of 500 patients, over half were males (52.6%), between 51 and 75 years of age (55.6%), and within the obese range (58.6%). With respect to comorbidities, 42.6% had hypertension and 39.2% had dyslipidemia on their first visit. In the sample, 8.8% had a history of myocardial infarction, 8.2% had neuropathy and nephropathy, 3.2% had retinopathy, 1.6% had cerebrovascular accidents, and 0.2% had peripheral vascular diseases. Among males and females, 39.9% and 19.4% had complications, respectively. With respect to glycaemic control, 14.2% had good control (HbA1c ≤6.5%) and 85.8% had unsatisfactory or poor control (HbA1c >6.5%).

Conclusions: More than half the patients who presented for the first time to the Diabetic Centre, Teaching Hospital Jaffna were found to be within the obesity range. The most prevalent complications were myocardial infarction, neuropathy, and nephropathy, with males being more affected than females. The majority had poorly controlled diabetes mellitus on presentation. Early initiation of screening may help to prevent complications.

Keywords: Diabetes mellitus, Complications, Glycaemic control, Risk factors