

International Conference on

METABOLOMICS AND DIABETOLOGY

May 23-24, 2018 | New York, USA

Prevalence of depression in type 2 diabetic patients in Trinidad and Tobago

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Statement of the Problem: Depression is a widespread problem among those suffering from diabetes. The purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of depression in type 2 diabetic patients in outpatient clinics in Trinidad and to identify associated contributory factors. The dual diagnoses of a chronic medical disease and mental disorder, symptomatic presentation and stringent treatment regimen are sources of psychological distress for patients and present a major challenge for health care workers. Approximately, 30% of adults with type 2 diabetes have depression and this combination is linked to higher complication rates, poor glucose control and decreased quality of life and increased risk of death (Richardson, Egede, Mueller, Echols, Gebregziabher, 2008).

Methodological & Theoretical Orientation: In a cross-sectional study, one hundred and twenty-eight (128) type 2 diabetic patients were investigated for depression using the Zung Depression Scale. All cases were diagnosed by a physician and patients were selected from outpatient clinics of the four major hospitals in Trinidad. The focus on the psychological symptoms of type 2 diabetes is based on the Kubler-Ross model of grief where the diagnosis of diabetes forces individuals to adjust to a new outlook of themselves and life, resulting in the onset of depression (Watkins, 2007).

Findings: The prevalence of depression was 17.9% of type 2 diabetic patients reporting mild to moderate levels of depression. Female type 2 diabetics had higher scores of depressions ($M=42.13$, $SD=9.83$, $p=.011$). Patients with coexisting medical complications had higher levels of depression ($M=44.01$, $SD=9.52$).

Conclusions & Significance: The prevalence of depression in type 2 diabetic patients highlights the necessity for psychological screening at diabetic health clinics in Trinidad, particularly for women and those with comorbid medical complications. This will aid in better control, quality of life and longevity.

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