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Association between fear of hypoglycemia and health related quality of life among children with type 1 diabetes

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Background/objectives: Lots of children with type 1 diabetes (T1DM), the unpleasant symptoms and undesirable consequences associated with hypoglycemia may result in significant anxiety depression or even a fear of hypoglycemia (FoH). This fear may have significant clinical inferences for diabetes management. The objectives of this study was to evaluate the association between FoH and quality of life among children with T1DM.

Design and methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 214 T1DM children (13–18 years) at the Diabetes Treatment Center, Prince Sultan Military Medical City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from June to September 2013. Arabic version of the Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory (PedsQL) 3.0 DM was used to assess their health related quality of life and pediatric fear hypoglycemia questionnaire was used to find out the FoH.

Results: Overall results indicated that children with higher level of FoH had lower level of quality of life. Compared to male, female children had higher level of FoH and lower PedsQL levels in all domains. Children with HbA1c level <7 had lower level of FoH. Similarly, compared to children treated with multiple daily injection, children treated with insulin pump had lower FoH. Children with diabetic ketoacidosis had significantly higher FoH and lower PedsQL levels in all domains than did those without diabetic ketoacidosis.

Conclusion: Results indicated significant associations between FoH and most of HRQoL domains. Understanding the effects of FoH on HRQoL is important for day-to-day clinical management to improve HRQoL of T1DM children.

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