

ABSTRACT

This study was done in Jamaica on diabetics, to determine if there was an association between knowledge about diabetes, attitude towards diabetes and the control of blood sugar levels. A total of 71 diabetes between the age of 40 and 64 years were investigated from four centres of care. The sample population consisted of 20 diabetics from the health centre of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, 20 from the diabetic outpatients' clinic at the University Hospital of the West Indies, 11 from a private practitioner and 20 from a Specialist Medical Officer.

To evaluate control, blood analysis for glycosylated haemoglobin levels was done and classified into three levels - 1. good control, 2. fair control, 3. poor control.

Good control was determined when ghb levels were between 5% to 8%. Fair control was determined when ghb levels were between 8.1% and 11% and poor control was determined when ghb levels were 11.1% and over. Respondents from the S.M.O. had the lowest mean ghb level of 8.47% which was in fair control followed by respondents from U.H.W.I. had a mean ghb level of 9.95%

still within fair control and respondents from P.P. had a mean ghb level of 10.38% which was in the upper limits of fair. Respondents from D.S.P.M. had a mean ghb level of 12.38% which was in the range of poor control.

It was found that knowledge scores were highest in respondents from U.H.W.I. followed by respondents from S.M.O. and then respondents from D.S.P.M. and P.P. respectively. The overall scores were about mid line of the maximum possible scores with no significant difference. It was thus determined that there was a general lack of knowledge on diabetes from respondents from all centres of care. The need for health education to all diabetics was high-lighted.

The most positive mean attitude score was from respondents from D.S.P.M. followed by respondents from S.M.O., U.H.W.I. and P.P. respectively.

The relationship between knowledge and ghb levels was tested with pearson correlation. It showed that the respondents from S.M.O. and P.P. had a weak inverse relationship. This suggests that as knowledge increase glycosylated haemoglobin levels should decrease or vice versa. At the two other centres D.S.P.M. and U.H.W.I., there was a weak positive relationship of no statistical significance.

The relationship between attitude and ghb levels when tested by pearson correlation showed a weak positive relationship of no significance with three centres of care S.M.O., D.S.P.M. and U.H.W.I. Respondents from P.P. had a weak inverse relationship that was not significant.

This study provided insight into respondents from centres of care that are not usually included in the usual epidemiological surveys. They are respondents from P.P. and S.M.O. The size of the sample was however, too small for indept conclusion. A further study on these areas would be further needed to gather more information which could be useful in the management of diabetics.