

ABSTRACT

Awareness of Risk Factors and Healthy Lifestyle Behaviours among offspring of parents with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus.

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Epidemiological evidence has revealed increasing prevalence rates of type 2 diabetes mellitus worldwide. It is estimated that over 13 million individuals have type 2 diabetes mellitus in Latin America and the Caribbean and this figure is expected to increase by approximately 45% by the year 2010. Type 2 diabetes mellitus is increasingly common, primarily because of increases in the prevalence of a sedentary lifestyle and obesity. Individuals with a family history of diabetes are at increased risk of developing diabetes, and studies have revealed that lifestyle modification can help reduce this risk. Whether type 2 diabetes mellitus can be prevented by interventions that affect the lifestyles of subjects at high-risk for the disease is not conclusive however, several studies have demonstrated that lifestyle choices, such as regular exercise or healthy dietary choices are associated with a reduced risk of developing diabetes. Therefore, in addressing prevention individuals need to be educated and become aware of the risk factors as well as lifestyle changes that must be adopted to delay or reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes mellitus. The study examined awareness of type 2 diabetes mellitus and lifestyles modification by offspring's of type 2 diabetics.

The study targeted offspring's of parents with type 2 diabetes mellitus since they are the most susceptible/ high-risk individuals for the disease. The research involved an assessment of awareness and knowledge of type 2 diabetes mellitus and its impact on the lifestyle of these offspring.

One Hundred and sixty (160) offspring, both male and female between the ages of 17 and over 65 were interviewed in the study. Two (2) diabetic outpatient clinics were visited and type 2 diabetic patients were interviewed to gain access to their offspring's to participate in the study. The offspring were contacted and once consent was obtained, the questionnaire was then was administered over the telephone to each respondent.

The results from the data collected revealed that lifestyle of off springs were significantly influenced by the knowledge of the disease (standardized beta coefficient = 0.311 and $p < 0.05$). The study also revealed that along with knowledge and awareness, social status (standardized beta coefficient = 0.251 and $p < 0.05$) was influential in lifestyle behaviour of the sample population. Thus although numerous studies have indicated that type 2 diabetes mellitus can be prevented by changes in the lifestyles of high-risk subjects, awareness and knowledge alone was not sufficient to change the lifestyle behaviour of high-risk groups. Social status was seen as a significant factor concerning lifestyle modification amongst offspring of parents with type 2 diabetes mellitus.

Keywords: Vashty Deochan; Type 2 diabetes mellitus; lifestyle modification; risk factors.