Factors Associated with Oral Health-Related Quality of Life of Persons with and without Diabetes in Trinidad & Tobago

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Objective: To identify demographic and lifestyle behaviors associated with oral health-related quality of life (OHRQoL) in persons with and without type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) in Trinidad and Tobago.

Method: A cross-sectional study was conducted that included diabetic and non-diabetic patients attending two hospitals in Trinidad. Data were collected using a 32-item questionnaire including the General Oral Health Assessment Index (GOHAI) as well as demographics, dental problems and lifestyle practices. Analysis of variance was used to examine differences in GOHAI scores. Differences were significant at $p<0.05$.

Results: 384 diabetic and 384 non-diabetic respondents completed the questionnaire. Of the total sample, 57.6% were female, 68.9% were aged 40 years and over, 69.6% had no more than a secondary school education, 40.8% did not consume alcohol, 81.6% did not smoke, and 70.3% did not exercise daily. More diabetics (90.9%) reported dental problems than non-diabetics (68.9%). GOHAI scores decreased with age but there was no sex difference. Among diabetic patients, GOHAI scores were highest in persons with tertiary level education and who exercised daily. They were lowest in persons who drank alcohol daily and those who smoked. Among non-diabetics, the only difference by demographics and lifestyle was that GOHAI scores were lower in persons who consumed alcohol daily. The decrease in GOHAI scores with age was also greater in diabetics than non-diabetics.

Conclusion: Diabetics had lower OHRQoL than non-diabetics, which worsened with age. This was related to demographics such as education as well as lifestyle factors such as smoking, drinking and exercise.