

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Diabetes knowledge among Greek Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus patients



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KEYWORDS

Diabetes knowledge;
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Abstract

Background & objective: Diabetes knowledge has been shown to improve glycemic control and associate with several demographic parameters. In Greece, a country with high obesity rates, disease knowledge has never been evaluated in diabetic patients. This cross sectional study aimed to assess diabetes knowledge and its associations between social and demographic parameters, among Greek type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) patients.

Methods: One hundred fifty nine patients with T2DM were recruited from an urban and a rural clinic in Greece. Diabetes knowledge was assessed with the Brief Diabetes Knowledge Test (DKT). Basic anthropometry was performed. Data regarding glycemic control and sociodemographic characteristics were collected from the patients' medical files.

Results: Greek T2DM patients demonstrated poor disease knowledge (mean DKT score $8.3 \pm 2.2/14.0$ and mean DKT as a percent of correct answers $59.6 \pm 15.8\%$). No differences were observed between sex, place of residence, or glycemic control, among subjects. Patients with higher education demonstrated greater diabetes knowledge. Simple obesity with concurrent central obesity or suboptimal glycemic control decreased diabetes knowledge among participants. Additionally, waist circumference was inversely correlated to diabetes knowledge. **Conclusions:** Based on the DKT, Greek patients exhibit poor diabetes knowledge. This study provides evidence for the need for better diabetes education in order to ameliorate disease outcome.

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Abbreviations: BMI, Body Mass Index; CI, confidence intervals; DKT, diabetes knowledge test; PR, prevalence ratio; T2DM, type 2 diabetes mellitus; SD, standard deviation; WC, waist circumference.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Conocimiento de la diabetes;
Diabetes mellitus tipo 2;
Educación sobre la diabetes;
Educación de los pacientes;
Alfabetización en salud

Conocimiento de la diabetes por los pacientes griegos con diabetes mellitus de tipo 2**Resumen**

Antecedentes y objetivo: Se ha demostrado que el conocimiento de la diabetes mejora el control de la glucemia y se asocia con varias características demográficas. En Grecia, un país con tasas de obesidad elevadas, no se ha evaluado nunca el conocimiento de la diabetes de quienes la sufren. El objetivo de este estudio transversal es valorar el conocimiento de la diabetes y su asociación con parámetros sociales y demográficos en los pacientes griegos con diabetes mellitus tipo 2 (DMT2).

Métodos: Se reclutaron a 159 pacientes con diabetes mellitus tipo 2 (DMT2) de una consulta urbana y otra rural de Grecia. El conocimiento de la diabetes se valoró mediante el Brief Diabetes Knowledge Test (DKT). Se recogieron datos antropométricos básicos. Los datos sobre el control de la glucemia y las características sociodemográficas se recogieron de los historiales médicos de los pacientes.

Resultados: Los pacientes griegos con DMT2 mostraron un conocimiento deficiente de la enfermedad (puntuación DKT media de $8,3 \pm 2,2/14,0$ y DKT media como porcentaje de respuestas correctas $59,6 \pm 15,8\%$). No se observaron diferencias entre los sujetos en función del sexo, del lugar de residencia ni del control de la glucemia. Los pacientes con mayor grado de educación mostraron mayor conocimiento de la diabetes. La obesidad simple con obesidad central o control subóptimo de la glucemia concurrente coincidía con un menor conocimiento de la diabetes por los participantes. Además, había una relación inversa entre el perímetro de la cintura y el conocimiento de la diabetes.

Conclusiones: Basándose en el DKT, los pacientes griegos tienen un conocimiento deficiente de la diabetes. Este estudio demuestra la necesidad de una mejor educación sobre la diabetes para mejorar la evolución de la enfermedad.

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Introduction

Type 2 Diabetes mellitus (T2DM) is one of the most common non-communicable diseases, afflicting millions of people worldwide.¹ The total burden of the disease is constantly increasing as a result of economic development, urbanization, physical inactivity and obesity.¹ During the year 2014, the global estimated prevalence in the adult population reached 9.0%² and according to projections by the year 2030, diabetes will be the 7th leading cause of all-cause mortality worldwide.³ T2DM patients are at increased risk for developing complications and comorbidities,^{4,5} which can only be hampered, once patients participate actively in the management of the disease.⁶ For self-management to be successful, several skills and competences must be attained by the patient, including a certain level of health literacy, as well as knowledge concerning the disease, decision-making, problem-solving and planning.⁷⁻⁹ Frequent evaluation of diabetes knowledge is required in order to provide more focused and personalized diabetes education and subsequently ameliorate disease outcome.

In Greece, a country with alarming obesity rates,¹⁰ the concurrent prevalence of DM in the adult population reaches 8.6%.¹ Despite the high prevalence of comorbidities and complications recorded among Greek T2DM patients,⁵ diabetes knowledge has never been evaluated. Thus, the present cross-sectional study was designed, in order to assess diabetes knowledge and its associations between social and demographic values, among T2DM patients in Greece.

Methods**Sample and study design**

The sample consisted of 159 adult T2DM patients (78 men), aging between 34 and 88 years old, recruited during 2008 as outpatients from three clinics, two situated in the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki, and one in rural Agrinio (Rural Hospital of Gavalou), Greece. The study's protocol was approved by the Ethical Committee of the Alexander Technological Educational Institute, as well as from each clinic's Director. Participants provided their written consent after being informed of the study's nature. The sample's general characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Patients' general characteristics ($n = 159$) (Mean \pm SD or n).

Men/Women (n)	78/81
Age (years)	63.9 ± 9.5
BMI (kg/m^2)	28.9 ± 4.6
HbA _{1c} (%)	7.1 ± 1.2
Overweight/Obese (n)	73/54
Treatment: Insulin/Oral pharmacotherapy	58/101
Site: Thessaloniki/Agrinio (n)	84/75
Education: Primary/Secondary/Tertiary/Postgraduate (n)	25/54/60/20

BMI, body mass index; SD, standard deviation.

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