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Culturally appropriate population strategies to reduce diabetes burden among the Middle East population in New South Wales, Australia

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Statement of the Problem: In Australia, 35% of Australians who reported having diabetes in 2001 were born overseas and of those born overseas, people born in the Middle East and North Africa had the second largest hospitalization and death rates for diabetes. The top three suburbs in NSW with the highest incidences of diabetes include Liverpool, Blacktown and Hinchinbrook respectively, while the highest prevalence for diabetes was found in Fairfield (6.2% of diagnoses of diabetes). Fairfield local demographics show that the greatest proportion of the migrant population (22%) of the Fairfield population identified as Iraqis (Middle Eastern). The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the contribution of culturally specific programs toward health outcomes and whether diabetes and health outcomes could be improved by using culturally appropriate media or education.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Six reports of pilot interventions in Australia were selected from 1995 onwards and were assessed for any qualitative reports of increased patient satisfaction, patient sense of self-management, weight loss or changes in HbA1c. Interventions included a Dance Fitness Class for Arabic speaking women, bilingually trained diabetes educator communication, Arabic Nutrition Advertisement programs via radio and swimming lessons for Afghan women and Muslims.

Findings: One intervention showed a reduction in body weight, 3 months following a bilingually trained diabetes education session, two interventions reported increases in patient satisfaction and awareness of their diabetes and three interventions were inconclusive.

Conclusion & Significance: Data is overall inconclusive about whether culturally appropriate media have appreciable impacts on diabetes control, weight loss or HbA1c but seem to show increases in patient satisfaction and awareness of their diabetes.

Biography

Richard Sadig has completed honors degree in Pharmacy from the University of Sydney. He has completed Post-doctorate degree in Medicine and Surgery at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney, where he researched diabetes as his area of interest for his population health project to see whether preventative measures aimed at local populations in NSW could improve diabetic outcomes. He was recently appointed as Security and Advisory Committee Member for the medico-legal indemnity company AVANT and is currently working as a Junior Clinical Doctor in St. Vincent's Hospital.

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