

14th World Congress on
Endocrinology & Diabetes

November 21-22, 2018 | Paris, France

HbA1c in patients with Type 2 diabetes mellitus and the association between HbA1c knowledge and glycemic control

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Aim : We did a cross sectional study to find knowledge regarding HbA1c in patients with Type 2 diabetes Mellitus and to find the association between HbA1c knowledge and glycemic control.

Background: HbA1c is a very useful test. However, knowledge about HbA1c remains low among patients. In a study from India done in the rural population in 2005, 94.1% of patients in the study population did know about HbA1c. The scenario is not vastly different in developed countries. Emma Beard et al showed in a study from the United Kingdom that the proportion of patients with good knowledge about HbA1C is about 26.5%.

Objectives : The primary objective of the study is to find the proportion of patients with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus with good knowledge about HbA1c. The secondary objective of the study is to find the association between HbA1c knowledge and glycemic control.

Methodology: We recruited patients with Type 2 Diabetes mellitus from General Medicine OPD. We collected baseline demographic data, details regarding diabetes and assessed knowledge regarding HbA1c using 4 questions. The latest HbA1c value of the patient also was collected from the clinical workstation.

Results: Of a total sample size of 100 patients with at least 22 patients with good HbA1c knowledge, we have so far recruited 62 patients. The mean age was 52.1 years. 53.2 % were males. Only 18 (29%) of the patients had ever heard of the HbA1c test. 13 patients (21%) knew what is HbA1c test. 8 patients (12.9%) knew their HbA1c goal. 7 patients (11.3%) remembered their last HbA1c. 52.9% of patients who have heard about HbA1c test has acceptable glycemic control (HbA1c <7.5%), while 46.5% of patients who have not heard of HbA1c test had acceptable glycemic control. Of those with poor knowledge regarding HbA1c, 50% had acceptable glycemic control while in those with good knowledge regarding HbA1c only 41.7% had acceptable glycemic control.

Conclusion: Knowledge regarding HbA1c in very poor among Indian patients. However, good knowledge does not seem to be translating into good glycemic control.

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