

Obstacles Facing Primary Care Physicians in Initiating Insulin in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Patients and Potential Solutions

Author: Sahar Khayat

saharmnk@gmail.com

Johns Hopkins Aramco Healthcare, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

+966567066234

Background:

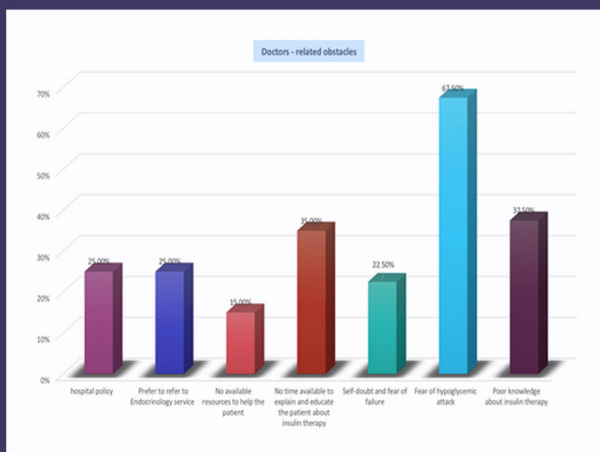
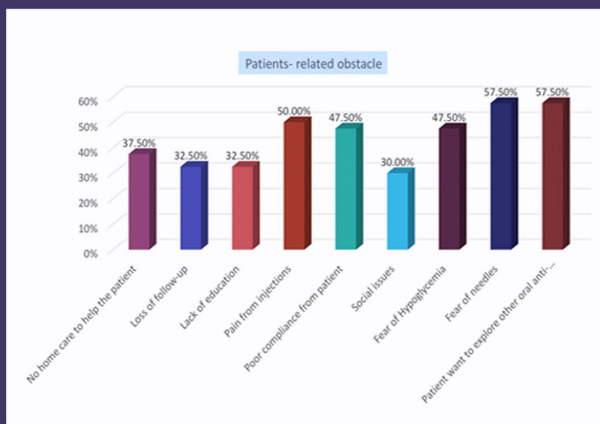
Diabetes mellitus (DM) type 2 is a chronic disease with high prevalence in Saudi Arabia. Many cases have uncontrolled glycaemia which lead to serious complications. One of the mainstay of treatment to treat un-controlled DM is insulin therapy. Many primary care providers (PCP) face obstacles prescribing it to the patients. In this study we discussed multiple challenges that faces PCP including doctor-related and patient-related challenges.

Methods:

This is cross sectional study, was conducted in Johns Hopkins Aramco outpatient primary care clinic in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. We surveyed 55 primary care providers by self administered questionnaire. The questionnaire included four parts. First Part has data of target population which include level of profession. Second Part is questionnaire addressing type of obstacle they are facing (initiation, hesitation, titration) by 3 questions. Third Part questionnaire which consists of doctors related and patient related challenges which contains 2 questions with multiple choice answers. Fourth part is free text to gather their opinions on other barriers and suggested solutions.

Results:

From the 55 participants participated in this study, 6(10.9%) did not report any obstacles. The most predominant profession was family Medicine residents (56.4%), followed by family medicine consultant (32.7%). Participants who reported facing challenges initiating insulinduring management a type 2 DM were (60%), while (54.5%) reported hesitation in initiating insulin, and (47.3%) stated having problem in titrating insulin While 60% of doctors reported facing issues initiating insulin to and this was statistically significant with their doctor's profession ($P < 0.047$). The most common cause related to the patient was found to be fear of needles and patient desire to explore other oral anti-glycemic agents by (57.50%) and the least cause was social issues(30%). On other hand, Two-thirds of physicians (67.5%) reported the fear of a patient's hypoglycemic attack as an obstacle, and this was associated with the doctor's profession ($P < 0.034$, $V = .449$). While the least related to the doctor cause was unavailable resources to help the patient. Regarding, self-doubt and fear of failure and profession were not reported among the family medicine consultants compared to another doctor's profession and statistically significant.



Discussion:

It was concluded that PCPs in Saudi Arabia face many obstacles in initiating or titrating insulin as their peers from other countries, such as patients' fear of hypoglycemia, weight gain, self-blaming, patient misunderstanding of insulin therapy as a last resort for diabetes, injection pain, needle phobias, social-related problems, and complexity of regimen. In which leads to a shortage of insulin prescriptions despite its value in managing diabetes. These obstacles should not stop PCPs from insulin prescription and titration, as it can be tackled by reasonable measures as having diabetic educators at each center, give more educations to the patients and care givers, and enhance the knowledge of working physicians, etc. And by addressing the low cost versus the high cost of diabetic complications and hospitalizations.