
PP03: A descriptive study on knowledge and awareness of hypoglycaemia in patients with diabetes mellitus admitted to a tertiary care hospital due to a hypoglycaemic episode

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INTRODUCTION: Hypoglycaemia had become an important complication globally, especially when meeting current diabetic goals with multiple drugs. Finding out gaps in patient's knowledge about hypoglycaemia is important to plan a strategy to prevent this serious complication.

OBJECTIVES: To assess the knowledge, awareness and practices about hypoglycaemia in patients admitted with hypoglycaemia

METHODS: Patients admitted with a documented or severe hypoglycaemic episode to medical wards of Colombo South Teaching Hospital over 3 months period were recruited. Data were collected using an interviewer based questionnaire.

RESULTS: Forty one patients were admitted with hypoglycaemia. Majority of patients(63%) were males and 83% were aged more than 50 years. 54% had diabetes for more than 5 years and most of the patients had either macro-vascular(76%) or micro-vascular(92%) complications. 21% had past episodes. 41% were on insulin. Blood glucose on admission was <50g/dL in 70% of patients. 97% had a major episode. Commonest presenting symptom was loss of consciousness (83%) and some had hypoglycaemic unawareness (17%). Other common symptoms were sweating (53%) and confusion (17%). 70% were previously educated on hypoglycaemia. Altered consciousness, confusion, sweating and palpitations were correctly identified as symptoms of hypoglycaemia by 70%, 40%, 61% and 22% respectively. 90% knew how to manage a minor hypoglycaemic episode. The major causes for hypoglycaemia were missing a meal (60%), renal impairment (26%), and alteration of drugs (12%). Only 39% of patients owned a glucometer.

CONCLUSIONS: Patients on insulin as well as oral drugs, should be educated on common hypoglycaemic symptoms to enable early identification and treatment. Importance of taking regular meals should be emphasized.