

Preparedness of Diabetic Patients for Receiving Telemedical Healthcare: A Cross-Sectional Study

Introduction

The advent of telemedicine comes with certain technological requirements the availability, accessibility & affordability of which might prove to be a hurdle in employing tele-medical solutions for day-to-day care.

Objective

To understand the feasibility of telemedicine among diabetic patients by assessing Knowledge, Attitude and Practice towards diabetes management & Tele-preparedness of Diabetic patients.

Method

Patients aged >18 years participating in Free Diabetes Screening Camps, either previously diagnosed with diabetes or undiagnosed with a random blood sugar level of more than 200 mg/dL were interviewed regarding their Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Preparedness for Telemedicine.

Result

Among $n=223$ (females 52.01%, mean age 57.21 ± 13.68 years) patients, only 11.65% knew the normal blood glucose range, 73.09% were taking oral hypoglycemics & 15.69% were on Insulin Therapy.

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67.26% considered taking their medicine very important. 15.24% had physical limitations (08.52% in walking, 02.69% in hearing & 01.79% in vision) that affected their ability to perform self-care. 58.74% were having comorbidities out of which Hypertension (30.49%), was the most prevalent. When assessed for self-care behavior 49.32% participated in regular exercise (walking, jogging & yoga, being the most common) and 41.25% agreed that physical exercise is very important for diabetes. In terms of Tele-preparedness, 64.57% were technically equipped and capable of independently operating video conferencing applications. 51.56% of the population had Glucometers in their homes, out of which only 46.95% (n=54) were able to use Glucometers themselves.

Conclusion

While most of the study population were aware of the importance of regular monitoring for Diabetes and practiced self-care behavior, challenges like lack of technical resources and their utilization still remain a limitation and need to be tackled for strengthening the care of such patients through Telemedicine.

Key Words

Telemedicine, Diabetes, Telemedical Healthcare, Preparedness, Cross-sectional