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Topic: Community health and nutrition programs

Title: Diabetes-related knowledge, attitude and practices of adult patients with type 2 diabetes in the Free State, South Africa

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Diabetes-related knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of adult patients with type 2 diabetes in the Free State, South Africa.

Objectives: To compile a demographic, anthropometry and KAP profile of adult patients with T2DM in the Free State public health sector.

Design: This was a descriptive observational study.

Setting: 255 participants were interviewed from 22 primary health care and community health care facilities, using convenience sampling.

Outcome measures: Questionnaire completed in an interview was used to determine demographics and KAP. Anthropometry measurements were taken using standard techniques.

Results: The majority of the participants were black women from urban areas (median age 57 years), who were overweight and obese (87%). Median age at diagnosis was 48 years and 10% were illiterate. 83% had a waist circumference above cut-off points. Half of participants knew normal range of blood glucose although 90% knew common signs of high blood glucose and two thirds were knowledgeable about complications. 81% felt that they would be a different person if they did not have diabetes. 71% felt that diabetes was the worst thing that had happened to them and 79% felt embarrassed about having diabetes. Although 96% were knowledgeable about the benefits of physical exercise, only 31% reported exercising every day during the past week.

Conclusions: Poor knowledge, a negative attitude and poor practices related to diabetes were observed in a very high percentage of participants, which may contribute to morbidity and mortality. Interventions to equip patients to successfully manage their condition are urgently required.