

2. Navigating Diabetes Care: Awareness, Self-Care Practices, and Treatment-Seeking Behaviors among Type 2 Diabetes Patients in Sialkot, Pakistan

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Background: One of the main causes of Global health problems is Type 2 diabetes. Regardless of the innovations in the medicine field, many patients still face trouble getting awareness and seeking medical treatment. In Pakistan, this prevalence will rise up to 15% by 2040, so, in order to improve the effects, it is very essential to understand treatment seeking behavior. The objective is to investigate the awareness, lifestyle choices and treatment-seeking behaviors among type 2 diabetes mellitus patients in Sialkot, Pakistan, and to examine the relationship between education level, duration of diabetes, and self-care behaviors. **Methodology:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at two hospitals of Sialkot from August 2025 to December 2025. Using Cochran's method, the sample size was calculated to be 308 participants. In order to determine the relationship between literacy, the duration of diabetes, and treatment-seeking behaviors, participants were interviewed about these factors, and the collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 27 with descriptive tests and Spearman's correlation. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize variables, and Spearman's correlation assessed associations between education level, diabetes duration, and treatment-seeking behaviors. **Results:** Most participants were women with low formal education. The most commonly perceived causes were anxiety (33.8%) and family history (33.4%). Foot numbness was the most common complication, affecting 46.8% of the population. Although 64.9% reduced sugar intake, only 24% engaged in daily physical activity and 51.3% of respondents adhered to regular medication. Stress (33.8%) and dietary restrictions (21.1%) were the most reported barriers. Longer diabetes duration was linked with poorer adherence and follow-up, whereas education showed a negative correlation with exercise, medication adherence, and laboratory follow-up. **Conclusions:** Despite partial awareness, significant gaps exist in awareness, self-care, and treatment-seeking among T2DM patients in Sialkot. Culturally-adapted education and structured community support are needed to improve long term outcomes. **Keywords:** Awareness; Pakistan; Self-care; Treatment adherence; Type 2 diabetes mellitus.

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