

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

India is currently in the grip of an explosive epidemic of Type 2 diabetes. We already have more than 60 million people living with diabetes in India, as per latest statistics. It is even more worrying that more than 50% of individuals with diabetes remain unaware that they have this condition.

A recent study from Chennai (CURES) threw up some alarming facts about the awareness or lack of it about diabetes in urban India. Up to 25% of the general population had never heard of diabetes. Even fewer people knew about risk factors for diabetes. Even among educated professionals (doctors included), more than 40% did not know that diabetes can be prevented.

A cross sectional study was done among 138 interns of R G Kar Medical College of Kolkata in 2011 to find out their awareness regarding diabetes, as they would become doctors in recent years and would play a vital role in the management of diabetes in India in future. Interns were interviewed with the help of a predesigned pretested questionnaire. Among the notable findings, 64.5% of the interns had correct knowledge regarding cause of diabetes, while 72.0 % of the interns could correctly enlist the symptoms of diabetes. Diagnostic criteria of diabetes were correctly stated by only 32 interns (23.2%). Correct approach regarding non pharmacological interventions like dietary interventions and exercise modalities was known to 46.4% of the interns, whereas 96(69.5%) of them could enlist the different pharmacological approaches. 57.9% of the interns was able to enlist the acute complications of diabetes while chronic complications could be

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elaborated by 79.7% of them. Larger role of lifestyle interventions in prevention of diabetes was agreed upon by 60.8% interns.

This survey highlights some of the weakness in the knowledge of the medical interns toward the management of diabetes, but a very encouraging feature of this survey was that almost 100% of the interns expressed their willingness for further training in relation to management of diabetes. These fresh medical graduates, who are the future family physicians, can be the most proficient healthcare providers to manage and screen for diabetes and diabetic in the community. The success will depend on their solid knowledge and skill which can be acquired by increasing the scope of hands on training on diabetes at undergraduate level.

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