

Warning Signs for Early Diagnosis of Suspected Diabetes (T2DM) Patients

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Diabetes Mellitus is a life style disorder. Its prevalence is 6 times higher in South Asia region and becoming a pandemic. Due to micro and macro vascular complications it causes significant morbidity and mortality. Diabetes is a silent killer with insidious onset. In Sri Lanka, one in five adults has either diabetes or pre-diabetes and one-third of those with diabetes are undiagnosed. Serious complications may be identified at the time of diagnosis. Therefore; early diagnosis of diabetes is beneficial. The aim of the study was to give a hint for undiagnosed diabetic patients to go for a screening test for diabetes. Complaints from 60 diabetic patients were collected and analyzed. It was found, more than 70% of diabetic patients have complained about lethargy and sleepiness. 60-67% patients have informed about blurred vision, weight loss, numbness of extremities and frequent urination during day as well as night. 57% patients had excessive thirst/dryness of mouth and 55% had impaired sexual desire with no gender difference. Slow healing skin lesions, short memory impairment, males with erectile dysfunction, fungal infections between toes, excessive sweating without exertion, frequent muscle cramps in legs, even in toes, impaired shoulder movements with severe pain (frozen shoulder), and prolonged joints pain were noticed among 20-26%. It was noticed that 16% of patients had past histories of gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) and reappear with diabetes within 1-5 years. It was evident that prolonged joints pain, weight loss, frozen shoulder, lethargy, sleepiness, skin eruptions, severe thirst and hunger, excessive urination, itching of vulva region appear as the only complaint at the time of diagnosis. It can be concluded that, the above complaints can be used as warning signals for undiagnosed diabetic patients to go for diabetic screening test. Majority of those complaints are very subjective and may appear alone or collectively. Their severity or probability may differ from patient to patient. Therefore, FBS (Fasting Blood Sugar) will be recommended in the presence of such warning signals.

Key words: Complications; Diabetes; Morbidity; Mortality; Prevalence.