Social Determinants of Health that Bring People with Diabetes to the Emergency Department in Stockton, California

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this study is to determine the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) that are barriers to patients with diabetes who were seen at St. Joseph's Medical Center's emergency department. The purpose of this research is to find out what gaps in care are still happening for people with diabetes utilizing the hospital emergency room. Our target population was people who suffer from diabetes.

The study site was St. Joseph's Medical Center, whose mission is to provide healthcare with the belief that God's presence is always present in our world. Through Community Grants Programs, they work side by side with other organizations to deliver services that address the health needs of San Joaquin County's most vulnerable residents.

Our study is community-based and is bringing knowledge to the forefront that can help address people with diabetes battling diabetes distress.

METHODS

A survey was conducted to assess the SDOH of patients that have attended the emergency department due to diabetes-related conditions. The list of participants was given to the researchers by St. Joseph's Medical Center's Community Outreach Department. A total of 10 participants were interviewed. The survey included sections with questions focused on the patient's socioeconomic status and living situation, finances, mental health, education, and medical condition. Some topics may have raised difficult emotions in some patients; thus, a suicide screener and referral process was given to them by the doctors.

Participants' responses were organized into sections depending on topic area. The many themes that arose based on the topic areas were social support, education, socioeconomic status, and diabetes-related distress.

- 8/10 endorsed when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, what does that look like?
- 8/10 endorsed I have panic attacks, I isolate myself, I yell, I stomp my feet, and I get anxiety
- 8/10 endorsed Do you feel that you are often failing with your diabetes regimen?
- 8/10 endorsed Have you been experiencing symptoms of stress or feelings of overwhelmedness?
- 8/10 endorsed If they ever experienced any symptoms of sadness, depression, hopelessness etc.?

Participants were social support, education, socioeconomic status, and diabetes-related distress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the recommendations include

- Provide people newly diagnosed with diabetes free diabetes education to learn how to manage their diabetes.
- Introduce mentorship programs within hospitals or clinics.
- Implement a diabetes distress scale (Polonsky, 2005) in hospital Emergency Departments to screen all people with diabetes.

CONCLUSION

The impact of this study gave a visual about how SDOH impacts a person's diabetes care and can lead to emergency room visits. All the findings intersect, healthcare literacy, socioeconomic status, employment, and having a support system. For example, diabetes-related distress might be lessened with additional social support. The research findings highlight that mental health and diabetes-related distress are relevant.

The study's contribution to the knowledge base is raising awareness of mental health issues that individuals with diabetes struggle with. When someone thinks about a person with diabetes, they may only think about the medical condition and how it affects their physical health. However, diabetes affects an individual in many ways, including their mental health and their family as well.

Diabetes is a family disease, and it can be challenging if there is not a support system.

REFERENCES

