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Barriers to leisure physical activity in adults with type 2 diabetes attending primary health care in Oman

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Background: Despite the evident benefits of physical activity in the management of diabetes, both diabetes and physical inactivity are highly prevalent in adults with diabetes in the Arab world. This study aimed at exploring the barriers to leisure time physical activity in adults with type 2 diabetes in primary health care in Oman.

Methods: A cross-sectional interview based survey using the CDC questionnaire “Barriers to Being Active” was conducted in Muscat, Oman for adults with type 2 diabetes attending their routine diabetes care in 17 randomly selected primary health care centers. Inclusion criteria were age >18 years, following up in diabetes clinic for more than 2 years and signed the consent to participate in the questionnaire.

Results: The study sample (n=305) had slightly larger proportion of females than males (57% and 43% respectively) with mean age of 57 years (SD= 10.8). Mean BMI was 30.96 kg/m², (SD=6.01). Identified co-morbidities were hypertension followed by dyslipidemia (71.1% and 62% respectively). Duration of diabetes extended from 2 years to 25 years (mean duration 7.59, SD 4.7). More than half of the sample had normal BP readings (77.7%) with normal total cholesterol, Nonetheless; just above half of the sample were uncontrolled diabetes with HBA1c ≥ 7 (58.4%). Compared to male, female sample had higher levels of HBA1c (61% vs. 55% respectively). Only 21.6% of adults with diabetes met the world health organization’s physical activity recommendations (MET \geq 600/week). Lack of social support (82.3%) followed by lack of willpower (81.6%) were the most reported barriers to leisure PA. However, compared to lack of will among males (78%), lack of social support was mostly reported by in females (86%).

Conclusion: Due to low levels of physical activity in adults with type 2 diabetes, interventions considering motivational strategies and social support to overcome the barriers to physical activity are warranted.

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