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Screening Psychiatric Disorders in Children with Type 1 Diabetes in Mazandaran During COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Type 1 diabetes (T1DM) in children is associated with psychological problems such as anxiety and depression, which are exacerbated by stressful situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings support the importance of comprehensive mental health screening and intervention for children with T1DM, especially during the critical developmental period of adolescence.

Methods and Materials: This comparative cross-sectional study was conducted at Bou Ali Sinai Hospital in Sari during the 2021 COVID-19 pandemic. The study investigated children under 18 diagnosed with T1DM, excluding those with pre-existing neurological or psychiatric conditions or COVID-19 hospitalizations. All participants were subjected to a semi-structured diagnostic interview using K-SADS-PL by a child and adolescent psychiatrist to assess psychiatric disorders. Subsequently, participants were divided into groups based on the presence of psychological disorders, and demographic data were collected. Comparative analyses, including chi-square tests and t-tests, were employed to determine differences in psychiatric disorder prevalence.

Results: Among 406 T1DM patients, 174 (42.8%) were identified with psychological disorders. The average age of the patients was 12.2 years, with a higher proportion of girls (52.7%). The relationship between mental disorders and gender was investigated utilizing chi-square tests, which revealed notable correlations for SAD, ODD, GAD, and ADHD. In contrast, no significant relationships were found for MAD, MDD, SOC, and ADJ. Concurrently, 29 patients (16.6%) exhibited co-occurrence of two psychological disorders. ADJ (61.4%) was the most prevalent psychological condition among diagnoses, while ADHD and ADJ (31.0%) had the highest comorbidity. The youngest age group, under five years old, had the fewest instances of psychological disorders, while the highest number was observed in the age group of 11 to 14 years old.

Conclusion and Discussion: This study emphasizes the occurrence of psychological disorders among pediatric patients diagnosed with T1DM. The findings demonstrated significant relationships between age, gender, and distinct psychological conditions. The importance of evaluating mental health in children with T1DM underscores the importance of early identification and intervention in promoting optimal diabetes care.

Keywords: COVID-19, Mental disorders, Type 1 diabetes mellitus

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