IS THE RULE OF HALVES APPLICABLE IN DIABETES TYPE 2?

EVIDENCE FROM GREECE

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Background & Objectives

The prevalence of Diabetes Mellitus type 2 in Greece is estimated around 7%¹ with an increasing incidence rate during the last years². Given that diabetes is a chronic disease with a significant clinical and economic burden not only for the patient but also for the health system as well, it is important to know whether the patients receive the necessary care and achieve the treatment targets. The “rule of halves” (ROH) applies in most common chronic disorders and suggests that half of the patients are undiagnosed, half of those diagnosed are not treated, and half of those treated are not controlled. The aim of the present study was to examine whether the ROH is applicable in the case of Diabetes type 2 in Greece.

Methods

Physicians who monitor patients with type 2 diabetes were invited to participate and complete the online version of a purpose-made questionnaire during a specified time period. An invitation was sent to the national associations of general practitioners (GPs), diabetologists and endocrinologists. The study took place between April and May 2014. Fully completed questionnaires were included in the analysis. Data analysis was conducted using STATA 9.

Results

176 physicians completed fully the questionnaire of whom 68.7% were men. Mean age was 47.8 years. The majority were internists and GPs (38.3% and 32.7%, respectively). Half of them had a masters’ degree (47.8%). Physicians estimated that in Greece 62% of those diagnosed with diabetes type 2 receive some kind of treatment (lifestyle or pharmacotherapy). 59.3% of those diagnosed will present at least one complication because of the disease. Less than half (43.3%) of those treated are controlled and achieve treatment targets (HbA1c≤7%). Of those not controlled, 73.3% will present at least one complication because of diabetes type 2.

Previous studies have shown that almost 30% of the patients suffering from diabetes type 2 in Greece are not diagnosed²,³. Based on our findings and the results of previous studies the Rule of Halves of diabetes type 2 in Greece calculated as a percent of the total diabetic patients is presented in Figure 1:

Discussion & Conclusions

According to our findings, in Greece more than half of the diagnosed patients with diabetes type 2 receive treatment in a regular basis. However, less than half achieve treatment targets and manage to stay controlled. These results are in line with previous studies conducted either at physicians who monitor diabetic patients¹ or at patients themselves⁴,⁵. Emphasis should be given in self-management, patient education and policies raising awareness for the early detection and management of diabetes type 2 in order to increase controlled patients and decrease the incidence of complications due to the disease.

References


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