
Clinical Correlates of Body Mass Index Status among Type 1 Diabetes Adolescents from Puerto Rico

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Abstract

Adolescents with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) are at increased risk for depression and stigma. Poor self-care and ineffective coping are also common, compromising their quality of life (QOL). Although Body Mass Index (BMI) problems may worsen these difficulties, few studies have examined this issue. We examined the clinical correlates of BMI status among 51 T1D Latino adolescents (aged 12-17). Participants enrolled in a depression-treatment study (IRB#1112-005) completed measures of depression, diabetes-related stigma, self-care, self-efficacy, and QOL. Using BMI categories, with sex- and age-based percentiles, youth were classified according to the presence ($n = 16$; G1) or absence ($n = 35$; G2) of BMI problems. We compared group means using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), followed by univariate analyses (ANOVAs). MANOVAs were significant for clusters of variables examined: depression/stigma ($p = .008$), self-care/self-efficacy ($p = .001$), and diabetes impact on body image/social relationships ($p = .002$). Youth from G1 reported significantly higher depression scores and more stigma experiences than their counterparts. The former reported more non-compliance eating snacks regularly, and lower self-efficacy asking help when sick, controlling the food they eat before activities, and controlling T1D in general. G2 members were more satisfied with their body appearance, perceiving less impact in their relationships. BMI problems may hinder the emotional well-being, body image and social relationships of T1D youth, and impact specific aspects of their self-care and confidence to manage the disease. Given its potential to affect clinical outcomes, BMI should be routinely assessed among this population.

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