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IS PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, DEPRESSION AND GENERALISED ANXIETY ASSOCIATED WITH GASTROINTESTINAL SYMPTOMS IN TYPE 2 DIABETES MELLITUS?

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Aim: Aiming to explore whether gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms are related to psychological distress, depression and generalized anxiety in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) patients.

Design: Case-control study.

Setting: Primary Health Care (PHC), Qatar.

Subjects : The study was based on matched by age, gender and ethnicity of 453 cases and 453 controls aged 20 years and above.

Methods: The study was based on a face to face interview with designed diagnostic screening questionnaires for GI symptoms and T2DM, Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) for depression and General Anxiety Disorders (GAD-7) for anxiety.

Results: Among the total 453 diabetic and 453 control subjects interviewed, the prevalence of GI symptoms in T2DM was 48% and in control 34.2% ($p < 0.001$). Obesity and overweight were higher in patients with GI symptoms in T2DM (47.1%) compared to controls (42.7%) ($p < 0.001$). Mental health severity was significantly higher in patients with GI symptoms when compared to controls; depression (8.2 ± 3.7 vs 6.0 ± 3.6) and anxiety (7.6 ± 3.3 vs 6.0 ± 3.7). The prevalence of severe levels of depression was nearly twofold (8.2%) in patients with GI symptoms in T2DM vs compared to controls (2.4%) ($p < 0.001$). Similarly, the prevalence of severe levels of anxiety was 19.6% with GI symptoms in T2DM patients compared to controls (13.7%) ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: The present study findings revealed that the prevalence rate of gastrointestinal disorders is high in T2DM. Also, GI symptoms are associated significantly with depression and generalized anxiety in T2DM patients. Anxiety was more common than depression with GI disorder in T2DM patients.