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The prevalence of depression and anxiety in seafarers type 2 diabetic patients

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Background and Aims: The number of type 2 diabetic patients, during the past several decades, has increased in the population of seafarers which have additional health-hazard. Depression and anxiety are prevalent co-morbid condition in diabetes as disease-related psychological reactions on this chronic metabolic illness. This study was aimed to determine the occurrence of depression and anxiety in seafarer's type 2 diabetic patients and its association with glycaemic control, degree of obesity and chronic microvascular complications.

Patients and Methods: A random sample of 52 diabetic seafarers treated with diet and oral glucose lowering agents, and 56 no diabetic seafarers were screened for depression with The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and for anxiety with State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI 1, STAI 2). Demographic details (age, duration of diabetes mellitus, body mass index (BMI), glycaemic control, therapy, microvascular complications) were recorded from the patient's medical records. The data on current life circumstances as seafarer (years on the ship, the duration of shipping routes during one year) were collected by a semi-structured interview.

Results: Depression (BDI score >18.5) and anxiety (STAI score <28.5) was significantly higher in the group of diabetic seafarers than in control group (more than 30%). Significant correlation was noted between depression and duration of diabetes mellitus, degree of obesity and poor glycaemic control (HbA1C>8%). The longer duration of shipping routes (over 6 months) were observed to significantly associate with severity and degree of depression and anxiety among diabetic seafarers.

Conclusion: The proportion of depression and anxiety was found higher in seafarer's type 2 diabetic patients than in the group of health seafarers. Performing these short screening tests for depression and anxiety in routine work, help us to prompt detection and treatment of both, diabetes and disease-related psychological reactions and mental disorders (anxiety and depression).

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