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Epidemiology of oral *Candida albicans* in diabetic and non-diabetic patients: Gender based study in rural and urban hospitals of Faisalabad

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Candida albicans is dimorphic yeast that causes many non-healing lesions of oral cavity like angular cheilitis, leucoplakia and thrush being most common. Candidiasis commonly occurs in diabetic, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and cancer patients as well as in patients under chemo and radiotherapies. *C. albicans* are also found in the oral cavities of infants. However till now there is no comparative data available regarding epidemiology and frequency of *Candida albicans* in rural or urban population in Pakistan. The study was conducted to evidence the epidemiology and prevalence of the fungus in the oral cavities of diabetic males and females in four hospitals (two village and two city hospitals) of Faisalabad. Swab and calculus samples were taken both from healthy and diabetic patients covering both genders. Antifungal susceptibility of *Candida albicans* was also evidenced using three antifungal agents (Fluconazole, Ketokonazole and Amphotericin B). Results showed that among city and village hospitals, occurrence of *Candida albicans* was found significantly higher in patients in village hospitals. Moreover, irrespective of city or village, the occurrence was significantly higher in diabetic patients with female diabetic patients more susceptible to *Candida albicans* fungus. However, the results were different in non-diabetic patients where male patients were significantly more infested than female patients. Finally, antifungal susceptibility showed that *Candida albicans* was responding better to Fluconazole followed by Ketokonazole and Amphotericin B respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that diabetic patients in general and female diabetic patients in particular are more susceptible to *Candida albicans* fungus and Fluconazole can be used to restrict the oral proliferation.

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