

ABSTRACT of the Ph.D. Thesis

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Topic: A Study of Psychosocial Implications of Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus Amongst Children, And of Their Family Coping Mechanisms, in the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

Abstract: In the backdrop of Ecological Theory given by Bronfenbrenner, the present study has brought forth the psychological and social impact of Type 1 Diabetes mellitus amongst children, on their families and caregivers. It uses a descriptive, ex-post-facto research design and follows a mixed method approach. Purposive sampling and Convenience sampling was used. A total sample size of 136 in which 94 families were visited. A total of 42 children have been interviewed.

Objectives: To understand the psychosocial implications of T1DM amongst children and their parent(s) and/or wherever possible other caregivers.

1. To understand the level of awareness of parent(s) and/or other caregivers about T1DM.
2. To evaluate the response of parents to the diagnosis of T1DM and their approach to management, including access to healthcare services.
3. To ascertain the coping strategies adopted by the affected families to mitigate the impact of T1DM.
4. To study the impact of social work intervention in select families in order to work towards improved management of diabetes.

Findings: The news of diagnosis is met with denial, shock and trauma. All aspects of a child's life; the family, the school, the peer group, career, romantic relationships and marriage, have to face the brunt of T1DM. Significant percentage of caregivers are under the extremely severe category of depression and anxiety. Majority of caregivers use social support and spiritual/religious coping to overcome stressors. Children reported physical pain from pricking and injecting, extreme sadness and guilt due to diabetes. A significant percentage of children developed eating disorders and reported self-harm tendencies

Recommendations:

- (a) Social support groups for T1DM
- (b) Training of School Staff and family education
- (c) Developing Evidence Based Practice by documenting the best practices of doctors
- (d) Creating Micro-Finance for meeting the expenditure
- (e) Doctors to periodically evaluate the child and refer them for psychosocial assessment
- (g) Social Work Intervention model to be developed
- (h) Generating a Data Base for policy makers and planners strengthening the public health system with a focus on prevention of diseases and promotion of good health
- (i) Sensitizing doctors who work with children suffering from chronic illness.