

Access to antidiabetic treatment and patient self-monitoring

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INTRODUCTION

Patient self-monitoring of blood glucose (SMBG) levels contributes to patient empowerment and optimization of management of diabetes. Continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) is increasing in use and involves monitoring blood glucose levels using a continuous glucose monitor.

AIMS

- To investigate the perception of patients with Type 1 diabetes (T1DM) regarding SMBG and CGM
- To identify problems encountered by patients when carrying out blood glucose self-monitoring

METHOD

A questionnaire on SMBG was developed in English and Maltese and validated in a previous study by Cassar (2009)¹. The questionnaire consists of 5 sections and was administered to patients via a semi-structured interview. The same questionnaire was used in this study with the addition of a section on CGM.

Setting: 15 community pharmacies selected by stratified random sampling

70 T1DM, ≥18 years were recruited into the study from the community pharmacies. Patient responses were analyzed using SPSS.

RESULTS

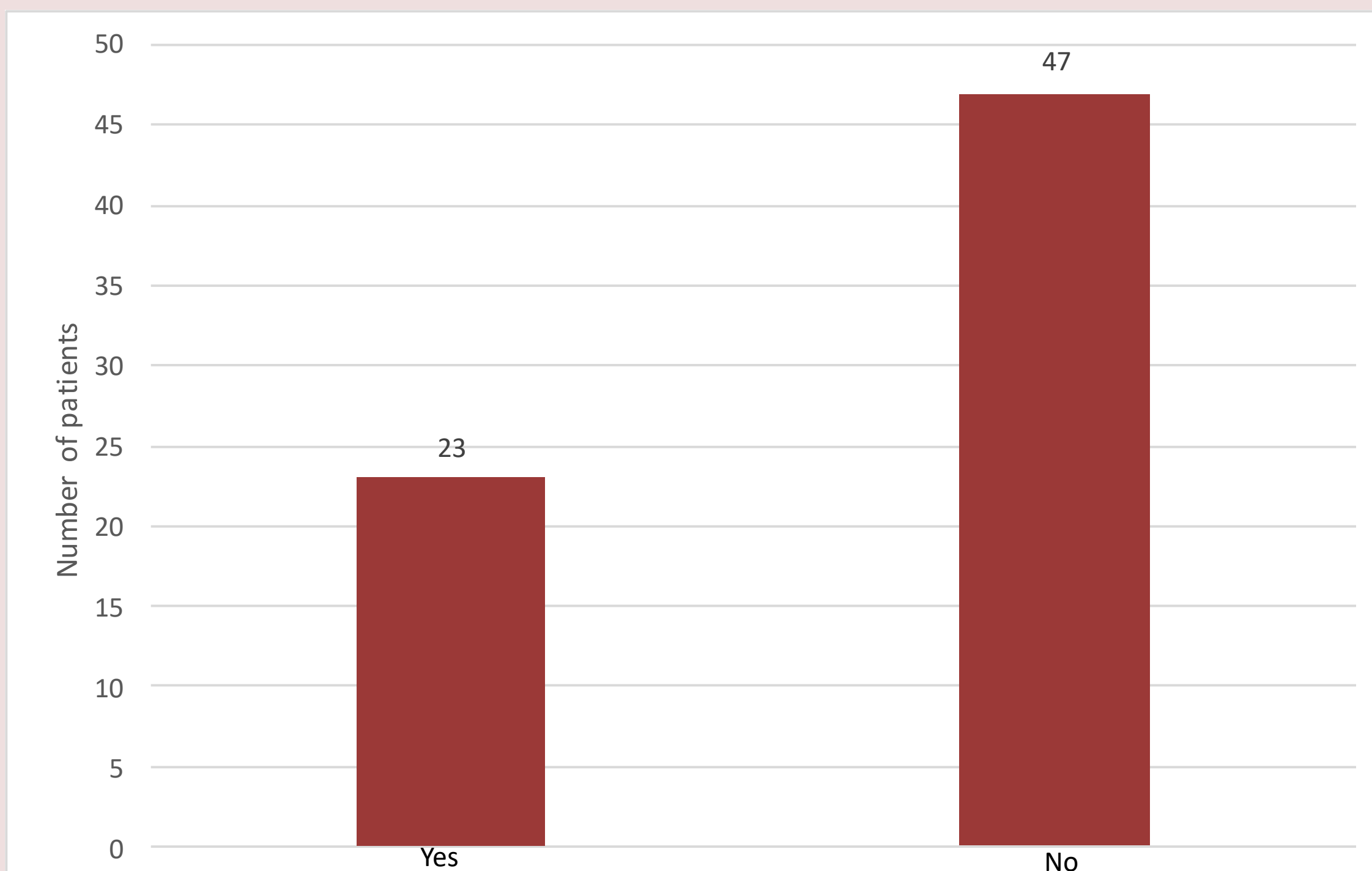


Figure 1: Availability of time to perform daily SMBG (N=70)

Seventy patients interviewed with mean age 39 years and range 18-69 years of age, 38 female and 32 male, with 51 having had duration of diabetes of more than 5 years. Five patients currently use a CGM device and 30 patients are willing to use CGM in the future. The majority of patients stated that they do not have enough time during the day to test their blood glucose levels (Figure 1). Sixty patients test their blood glucose more than once daily, 5 patients test their blood glucose once daily, 5 patients test only when feeling symptoms of hyper and hypoglycaemia or when feeling ill.

CONCLUSION

Patients are not adhering to the recommended daily schedule for SMBG for various reasons including access to test strips and time limitations. Frequency of self-monitoring should be catered on an individual patient basis. Empowering patients, improving awareness and access to self-monitoring may contribute to overcome the self-monitoring problems identified in this study

REFERENCE

1. Cassar J. Diabetic patient management [project]. Msida (Malta): Department of Pharmacy, University of Malta; 2009.