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Disparities and the financial impact of diabetes

Ani Bodoutchian, H DeSousa, R Nair, H Shilgevokyan

Southside Hospital, Northwell Health Department of Family Medicine, Bayshore, NY, USA

Corresponding author: Dr Ani Bodoutchian, Northwell Health, Family Medicine, West Babylon, NY, USA. E-mail: abodoutchian@gmail.com

Background and Aim: Diabetes wreaks havoc on all the lives it touches, the patient and their families. The socioeconomic ramifications are staggering across the globe. Since there are so many advances in medication in diabetes there seems to be a chilling twist on the staggering numbers as we look around the world with the incidence, prevalence and disparities of this very common household disease. Globally in 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) “estimated that almost 382 million people suffer from diabetes for a prevalence of 8.3%. North America and the Caribbean is the region with the higher prevalence of 11% having 37 million people with diabetes followed by the Middle East and North Africa with a prevalence of 9.2% having 35 million people with diabetes. Western Pacific is the region with higher number of people living with diabetes (138 million); however its prevalence is 8.6%, close to the prevalence of the World.”

Methods: Existing literature was reviewed and compared from different nations/countries.

Results: Diabetes not only affects the quality of life of people with the disease, but also presents a tremendous economic burden. It seems that much of the economic burden of diabetes is related to its complications, including blindness, amputation, kidney failure, heart attack, and stroke. In the United States, every 17 seconds, someone is diagnosed with diabetes. Every day, 230 Americans with diabetes will undergo an amputation, and 120 will develop end-stage renal disease. Additionally, 45% of people with diabetes have some diabetic retinopathy.

Conclusion: Racial and ethnic minorities have a higher prevalence and greater burden of diabetes compared to whites, and some minority groups also have higher rates of complications. Despite medical advances and increasing access to medical care, disparities in health and health care still persist.