The impact of social stigma towards type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) patients

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: One of the greatest barriers to the treatment of T2DM is non-adherence which can be due to stigmatization. There is a need for a comprehensive overview of all factors and effects of societal stigma towards T2DM patients. The aim of this study is to identify the social stigma faced by the individual with T2DM, explore the factors contributing to stigmatization towards T2DM and to identify the effects of social stigma on T2DM management. **Materials and Methods:** A scoping review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA flow diagram. A systematic search was performed in ProQuest, Scopus and Science Direct. **Results:** A total of 32 studies were included in the scoping review. The synthesis revealed the ways, factors and effect of stigmatization. People with T2DM face stigma linked to weight loss, lifestyle blame, and insulin use. Discrimination occurs in healthcare, social, and workplace settings, leading to internalized shame, low self-esteem, and treatment avoidance. Contributing factors include cultural beliefs, misconceptions, lack of awareness, and sociodemographic vulnerabilities, especially among women and single individuals. Stigma affects disease management by reducing treatment adherence, worsening mental health, and increasing complications. Suggested measures include public education, targeted interventions, psychosocial support, and policy changes to reduce stigma and improve outcomes. **Conclusion:** The most prominent way of stigmatization is public stigma. Misconception of T2DM was identified as the most prominent contributing factors and the greatest effect of stigma is non-adherence to treatment. Targeted measures must be taken to curb social stigma. The findings indicate a need for further research to continue achieving further progress on this issue, for tackling the barriers that people with T2DM encounter.

Keywords: Social stigma, stigmatization, Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, T2DM