



'Diabetes Cure in 72 Hrs': Increasing Number of Bogus Claims in the Reversal and Management of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus – A Review

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Abstract

The global increase in the incidence of diabetes is driving people to seek for a diabetes 'cure', especially in type 2 diabetes mellitus. Capitalising on the growing demand, increasing number of bogus claims on 'diabetes cure' are available over internet and social networking sites. In this review, two such bogus claims are being reviewed with the half-science behind it. Evidence-based diabetes care is the need of the hour in diabetes management and patients should bring to the immediate notice of their physicians on any false unscientific claims on diabetes cure, so as to verify its authenticity and get clarifications on the same.

Keywords: Diabetes Cure; Bogus claims; Glucometer

Abbreviations: WHO: World Health Organization; ADA: American Diabetes Association; GLUT2: Glucose Transporters-2; T2DM: Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus; CAM: Complementary and Alternate Medicine

Background

Dissemination of authentic research evidences to common people is enabled through the World Wide Web. Internet and social media play a vital role in delivering health information and research evidences across the globe. Official health bodies like the world health organisation (WHO), American diabetes association (ADA) and Diabetes UK communicate authentic information on their own official websites, and also effectively use social media to deliver beneficial health information to the masses. On the other end of the spectrum, there are

bogus unqualified individuals who use social media to spread their false claims to lure people into many claims on diabetes reversals and management without drugs. More often than not, they use their half-knowledge, if not no-knowledge to substantiate their claims. These bogus claims often go unreported in the scientific literature. To our knowledge, this is the first attempt to report such bogus claims.

Scenario 1

'Diabetes cure in 72 hours' is easily 'scam of the decade' and was one of the most popular YouTube search for diabetes in the recent past. Here, the 'quack' conducting the seminar accuses that common men are being cheated by the health care industry saying that diabetes is incurable. He claims fructose as a 'cure' for diabetes and asks diabetes

patients to eat lots and lots of fruits and vegetables for 72 hours and their diabetes will be 'cured'. Patients were convinced that fructose does not increase blood glucose levels by using a 'glucometer' to measure fructose. As the meter was not able to detect the fructose content (as it was only calibrated to measure glucose and not fructose), he shows the glucometer to the audience mentioning that similar to the glucometer even our body cannot sense the fructose and thus safe for diabetes [1].

The obvious flaw in the claim was increased 'blood glucose levels' could be reversed in 72 hrs, but not diabetes. Without the required recommended calorie being provided by the food, body obviously goes back on low glucose levels temporarily, but shoots up once again after re-feeding. HbA1C is a more valid measure in understanding the prognosis of diabetes, than random blood sugar. Negative calorie balance is definitely found to be helpful and in the remission of T2DM Lim et al. [2] however, those interventions are to be carried out for a period of 12 months to satisfy the definition of the word 'remission' Lean et al. [3]. The self-proclaimed 'doctor' was actually a 'PhD' doctor with no formal education in medicine or allied health sciences. The person is practising in the South Asian country of Bangladesh.

Scenario 2

Another interesting bogus claim from India in an advertising leaflet was stating 'Cure your diabetes with sweets'. It further mentioned that people are not aware that 'body needs sugar to secrete insulin' and doctors are not mentioning this secret to their patients. His claim again was that health industry is cheating people by asking them not to eat sweet when they have diabetes. The claims are again based on the half-knowledge of the individual on glucose transporters-2 (GLUT-2) which senses glucose in the blood and signals for the insulin release. Glucose, without doubt, is one of the potential trigger in the insulin production and

secretion, however, it is impaired in T2DM Prentki & Nolan [4]. Further increase in the blood glucose on top of hyperglycaemia in T2DM will only lead to glucotoxicity and further worsening of glycaemic control. T2DM is a much more complex condition which requires thorough understanding of its pathophysiology before administering the required therapy.

Conclusion

Bogus claims on 'cure' for T2DM is increasing day-by-day, however mention of the same is least reported in scientific literature. Most of which are happening in the name of Complementary and Alternate Medicine (CAM) therapies which needs proper regulatory bodies. Common people as well as the regulating bodies have to be increasingly aware of these claims which affect the safety of the patients to a great extent, increasing their morbidity or even mortality. Patients must seek the advice of their physician and keep them informed before trying out any attractive claims in internet.

References

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