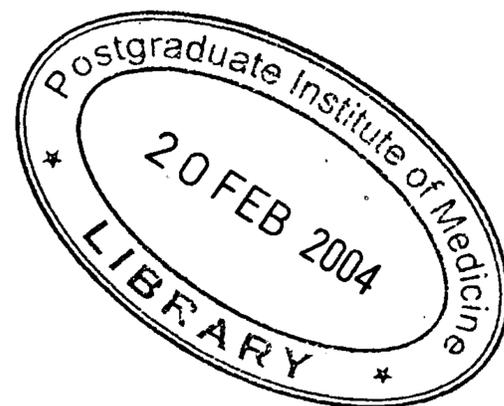


## ABSTRACT

Diabetes mellitus is a major non-communicable disease causing prolonged ill health; premature morbidity and mortality that affect a large number of people in Sri Lanka. It is a growing public health problem which needs attention, with changing age structure of the community. Early diagnosis, prompt and effective treatment, and education of diabetic patients can lead to substantial reduction in the complications, with consequent improvement in quality of life.

A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted from 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2000 to 19<sup>th</sup> Oct.2000, at the General Hospital, Kandy, with the objective of studying the knowledge and attitudes of diabetic patients about their disease and its control; with a view to give necessary recommendations to improve the knowledge and positive attitudes towards the disease and its control.

385 patients attending over 15 diabetic clinic sessions were interviewed using a pretested structured questionnaire to collect the socio economic and demographic data, and to assess the knowledge. 119 patients who were able to read and understand, were administered the questionnaire based on attitudes.



Most of the diabetics (40%) participated in the study were in the sixth decade, 60% of the respondents were females and among them majority were housewives (79%). About 99% of the respondents were Sinhalese.

Among the respondents 88% were married and majority of them (80%) had 1 – 4 child/children. About 48% of the respondents were educated up to grade nine. About 92% patients were literate and majority of diabetic patients (67%) had monthly family income of less than Rs.5000.00 About 30% of respondents had the family history of diabetes mellitus. With regards to alcohol consumption and smoking, only 11% were alcoholic and the findings were same with smoking.

Majority of the respondents had the diabetes mellitus for less than 5 Years. About 55% of diabetic patients were diagnosed as an incidental finding.

Knowledge about the aetiology of diabetes mellitus was poor among the respondents, and 25% of them did not know the causes for diabetes mellitus. Respondents had fairly good knowledge about the treatments of diabetes mellitus and the knowledge about the test that carried out to see the disease status were inadequate. Respondents had poor knowledge about the symptoms of hyperglycemia and blood sugar levels. Most of the respondents ( 79% ) knew what to do in case of hypoglycemia.

Respondents had fairly good knowledge about the complications and the organs that can be affected by diabetes mellitus. Most of the diabetic patients participated in the study were aware of dietary control. Majority (73%) of respondents have got first hand knowledge about diabetes mellitus from hospital staff.

When considering the positive attitudes of diabetic patients towards the disease and its control, study showed that significant statistical difference on positive attitudes between different sex ( $p= 0.04$ ) , different income groups ( $p=0.000$ ) and respondents with family history and without family history of diabetes mellitus (  $p= 0.003$ ). But there was no significant statistical difference in median attitudinal scores between age groups, with number of children they have and marital status.