

Type 2 Diabetes Patients on Medication Report High Rates of Hypoglycemia

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SAN DIEGO (EGMN)—Regardless of whether they take oral diabetes medications, roughly 40%-43% of type 2 diabetes patients who took insulin reported having hypoglycemia in the past month, according to survey findings from 2,801 adults.

“Hypoglycemia is a leading limiting factor in the glycaemic management of adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus who are treated with insulin or a sulfonylurea agent,” Dr. Andrew Green said at the annual meeting of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists. The findings suggest a need to consider the risk of hypoglycemia as part of a risk-versus-benefit analysis when designing a treatment regimen for type 2 diabetes patients, he added.

Of the survey respondents who received oral medications, 52% reported receiving sulfonylureas. And among those patients using sulfonylureas for the past 12 months, significantly more of them reported having hypoglycemia during the past month than did those who did not receive sulfonylureas (28% vs. 19%).

The 5-year population-based survey, known as the Study to Help Improve Early Evaluation and Management of Risk Factors Leading to Diabetes (SHIELD) was initiated in 2005.

Overall, 1,793 patients (64%) received oral medication only, 221 (8%) received insulin only, 361 (13%) received both types of therapy, and 426 (15%) were not receiving any diabetes treatment at the time of the survey. The average ages of the patients in group ranged from 61 to 65 years; more than 70% of the patients in each group were white, and more than half (58%-64%) were women, said Dr. Green, an endocrinologist in Overland Park, Kansas.

Patients who received both insulin and oral medications were significantly more likely to be younger and obese compared with those who received either type of treatment alone.

The study was limited by the use of self-reports and the lack of data on the severity and causes of hypoglycemia.

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